CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 February 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Fisseha Yimer (Ethiopia)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 895th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset I should like to extend our welcome to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, who is with us today. His presence at our plenary meeting is evidence of his enduring interest in the work of the Conference as well as of his continuous support to our efforts in the field of arms limitation and disarmament.

I have the following speakers on my list for today: Ambassador Heinsberg of Germany, Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands, Ambassador Johansen of Norway, Ambassador Lint of Belgium, Ambassador Westdal of Canada and Mr. Sugondhabhirom of Thailand.

Following their statements, I will also give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky.

Once we have heard all the speakers, I intend to proceed to the appointment - the stage which we have now reached in this matter - of the officers to fill the posts of special coordinators established in decision CD/1667, taken by the Conference at its 893rd plenary meeting on 14 February 2002.

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg.

Mr. HEINSBERG (Germany): Mr. President, being new to the Conference on Disarmament and taking the floor here for the first time, allow me to extend to you my best wishes for the important and demanding task you have assumed as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation. I would also like to thank all colleagues and friends in the Conference for the warm welcome that they have extended to me in this body. Allow me also to extend my greetings to Under-Secretary-General Mr. Dhanapala, to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Petrovsky, to the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Román-Morey, and to the members of the secretariat. I include in my greetings our interpreters, whom I thank one and all for the task that they are doing.

In the aftermath of the horrible attacks of 11 September 2001, we all agreed on the United Nations resolution on multilateral cooperation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and global efforts against terrorism. In this resolution we all reaffirmed that multilateralism is the core principle of negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, leading to the strengthening of universal norms and the widening of their scope. We all emphasized that progress is urgently needed in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to help maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism. All of us further agreed to call upon all Member States to renew and fulfil their individual and collective commitments to multilateral cooperation as an important means of pursuing and achieving their common objectives in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Mr. President, it is time to implement these commitments here and now in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Heinsberg, Germany)

I have to express my deep concern about the current state of the Conference on Disarmament, which normally is characterized politely as a "stalemate" or "impasse". In going through the records of the Conference's plenary meetings since 1999 and listening to recent statements here, I also came across some more drastic expressions. Indeed, Mr. President, the situation in the Conference on Disarmament does not look very promising.

Since 1999 the Conference has been unable effectively to launch any substantive work. In document CD/1036, entitled "Decision on the improvement and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament", the members agreed that, at the beginning of its annual session, "the Conference, shall establish its programme of work". As in previous years, however, the first four weeks of this year's annual session - and now even more - have already passed, without a work programme being in sight.

This important body was established by the General Assembly at its tenth special session to be the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament has a track record of many multilateral agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation. This forum has shown that it is capable of producing specific arms control and disarmament agreements when the member States have the political will.

We have to live up to our responsibility and perform the real task for which we were established. Let us use the plenary of this Conference for a far-reaching exchange of views on the relevant issues on our agenda with a view to overcoming the present impasse and to underscoring the importance of this eminent international body.

The German Government supports all efforts to strengthen and develop further the multilateral instruments of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, so that they continue to meet the challenges of a changing security environment. Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are essential elements in our endeavours to establish a new cooperative security order for the twenty-first century.

The process of nuclear disarmament must be further strengthened and resolutely advanced. Accordingly, Germany continues to attach the utmost importance to the start of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material (FMCT). In this context, I would like to recall that the NPT-member States, in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, agreed on the necessity of the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. Germany is also concerned about the prospects of an arms race in outer space. We therefore, attach high importance to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, without delay, and the commencement of substantial work on the issue. But we do think that every issue should be dealt with independently. We agree with the position put forward by our Russian colleague in support of the re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on FMCT with a negotiating mandate - without linkages to other issues.

Successive presidents of the Conference on Disarmament have made tremendous efforts to bring about an agreement on a work programme. The proposal of the Brazilian presidency,

(Mr. Heinsberg, Germany)

the "Amorim proposal", put forward in August 2000, contains the essence of these efforts. The German delegation fully shares the assessment of our British colleague that, since August 2000, nothing better than the Amorim proposal has come along, nor does it look likely to. As has been eloquently pointed out by our Japanese colleague, the Amorim proposal contains the necessary degree of flexibility to allow every delegation in the Conference on Disarmament to see its position safeguarded.

Why then, can we not move beyond the formula: "as a basis for consultation?" By repeating it over and over for more than one year without any substantial result, this has become an empty shell. I suggest making a serious effort to reach consensus on a work programme on the basis of the Amorim proposal. If we succeed, we can engage in a working process on a number of important items on the international agenda for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation:

- Nuclear disarmament;
- Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
- Prevention of an arms race in outer space;
- Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
- Questions related to anti-personnel landmines;
- Transparency in armaments.

That would bring the Conference back to its raison d'être and respond to the call expressed in the United Nations consensus resolution on multilateral cooperation in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and global efforts against terrorism.

Mr. President, it is often stated that the adoption of a substantive work programme for the Conference on Disarmament could be possible if good will and flexibility prevailed. Germany considers it the responsibility of all - and I repeat - of all member States of the Conference on Disarmament to make use of this body in order to advance the cause of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, especially at this critical juncture. We should not allow future generations to relegate us to a mere historical footnote, because we did not live up to the challenges of our time.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Chris Sanders.

Mr. SANDERS (Netherlands): Mr. President, when I entered this room this morning, for the first time I noted the sun is shining. Normally, the curtains behind you are closed, but this morning the sun is shining into this room, and I am in it, and I hope it is a very good sign for our work.

Mr. President, I would like to extend to you my congratulations and best wishes on your appointment as President of this Conference and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in seeking progress in the work of the Conference this year. I should also like to thank the secretariat for its invaluable support to the work of this Conference.

Last but not least - and I saw he came in right at this moment - I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General of this Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who is with us today for the last time before he leaves Geneva. His presence in this body, as well as his continuous support for substantive work in the Conference, has been of invaluable support to the Conference. It has been a pleasure for myself and for my delegation to work with him. I look back to a wealth of good memories on our cooperation with Mr. Petrovsky in this body and outside this room. May I convey through you, Mr. President, our best wishes to Mr. Petrovsky for the future, both professionally as well as personally.

Mr. President, tomorrow is the third anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines. This treaty has been of extreme importance and has over the past years made good progress in this very important cause, which has the full support of my Government. I fully associate myself with others who are going to speak on this issue and will address the Conference accordingly.

As most of you will be aware, the Netherlands is a member of the European Union and fully shares the common foreign and security policy of the Union. Some time ago our Spanish colleague, Ambassador Carlos Miranda, spoke on behalf of the Union, and it is not my intention to repeat what he said.

Individual members of the European Union do have their own priorities, which are of course fully compatible with the Union's common positions, but which tell you something from their national perspective. The European Union's common positions are like a rich menu to which every member of the Union has contributed some of its national flavour. I do not want to exaggerate the quality of Dutch cuisine, but still we think it is worthwhile to tell you about some of the specific ingredients that we have added to this menu.

First of all, I would like to point out the historical role that the Netherlands has played in the development of international law. In the short term, countries may see advantages in being eclectic in their approach to the law of nations. Where it would serve their immediate interests, they would like to avail themselves of legally binding treaties, in other cases they would prefer other approaches.

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

In our view, we should continue to stress the importance and viability of the sustained long-term approach focused on the multilateral architecture. This is not to say that urgent short-term objectives should not be pursued, but that should not be to the detriment of the long-term goal of creating an international legal framework that will govern our behaviour in the field of security and disarmament. Some of our negotiations might be delayed, but as a matter of principle we are committed to the multilateral track and do not wish to see its existence questioned.

Regrettably, last year was not a very propitious one for multilateral disarmament. I will not dwell upon this, as the position of the European Union on the value of multilateral disarmament in general and the implementation and strengthening of the various regimes is well known. For us in the Conference on Disarmament, it is important to find agreement on what the Conference's share of the multilateral agenda can be. The Netherlands fully supports the Amorim package, which is balanced and gives every member of the Conference its share of the multilateral pie. But I would like to draw your attention to two cherries on the Conference's agenda, which traditionally have been very much to our liking: first, a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and, second, the subject of transparency in armaments.

Negotiations on an FMCT are long overdue. We are all very much aware of the reasons - or rather, the causes - which inhibit the early commencement of these negotiations. I will not go into these problems now, although I personally find it quite astonishing that, at a time when there is so much talk about the value of multilateralism, apparently the only multilateral negotiations which we all agree upon cannot start for those reasons. Anyway, it is our conviction that, as long as this situation persists, we should find alternative means of promoting the cause of an FMCT.

Accordingly, about one year ago, we initiated broad and open-ended consultations on a process that could prepare the ground for FMCT negotiations within this Conference. The purpose of this process or exercise is that, once the political conditions allow for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, part of the homework will already have been done and by that time we will be able to make progress in the Conference more expeditiously than would otherwise have been the case. Now our children hate to do homework, but nevertheless we know we must convince them that they should do it. I am confident that, when our children grow up, they will agree with us that this homework was indeed necessary. And I am sure that all of you will agree about that with me as well - at least I hope so.

I will therefore continue the process that we started last year. We were grateful for the two seminars that were organized by Germany, and by Japan and Australia. They provided an excellent opportunity for a substantive debate on core issues of an FMCT. But we would like to put this work on a more structured and systematic footing. I will consult with you on how to do this. We will keep the process alive, and I hope I can count on your support in the coming year.

On a separate note, I would like to draw your attention to another way in which the cause of FMCT could be further promoted. We would like to explore the idea of an appeal to relevant members of the Conference on Disarmament to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material and to take transparency measures related to production and stocks, pending the

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

conclusion of a treaty on the prohibition of production of fissile material. Such a step would undoubtedly be conducive to preparing the ground for expedient negotiations and would, in its own right, be a useful interim contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

This brings me to the second part of my statement, which is on transparency in armaments. Transparency, as most of you may know, is very close to the hearts of the Dutch. Whether it comes to politics or business, the Dutch like openness. We live in a flat country and we do not close our curtains at night - at least not in the living room. In the sleeping rooms I think we do close them. We always try to be as transparent as possible.

Transparency in armaments is one of the major confidence-building principles among States, which enables the international community to be better informed about military matters and developments. Transparency in armaments thus diminishes misperceptions and helps obviate the distortion of information.

The desirability of transparency applies as much to weapons of mass destruction as it does to conventional weapons.

Let me first talk on the transparency of conventional arms. Two important instruments are at hand here: the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the system for standardized reporting on military matters, including transparency in military expenditures. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has become reasonably well established over the past 10 years. It has established a de facto norm of transparency. It provides a significant and ever increasing amount of information officially reported by Governments, which otherwise would not have been available. The Register also has prompted many Governments to improve their national systems for monitoring and controlling the transfer of conventional arms. Finally, the Register has set an example for regional initiatives, such as the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions. In order to boost participation in the Register even further, I am very pleased to announce that the Netherlands, together with Canada, Germany, Japan and the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations, is planning to organize a number of regional seminars in Africa and Latin America to promote understanding and knowledge of the Register.

Standardized reporting on military matters and transparency in military expenditures are also important in building confidence among States, thereby enhancing international peace and security. Reporting on holdings and transfers of conventional arms has become an accepted phenomenon, whether it is on large calibre conventional arms, on small arms and light weapons or on landmines.

The Netherlands, as I have said, also attaches particular importance to transparency in the field of weapons of mass destruction. This applies equally to the Biological Weapons Convention, where the Netherlands has always strongly advocated randomly selected transparency visits, the international monitoring system of CTBT, the inspection regime of OPCW and the additional safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

The Netherlands is a staunch advocate of increasing transparency with regard to nuclear arsenals. At the NPT Review Conference held two years ago, we put forward some proposals in this respect, together with Belgium, Germany, Italy and Norway. The NPT 2000 Final Document calls for increased transparency by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to nuclear weapons capabilities and the implementation of agreements pursuant to article VI and as a voluntary confidence-building measure to support further progress on nuclear disarmament. According to our original proposal at the Review Conference, such measures could include a commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to provide periodically the aggregate numbers of warheads, delivery systems and stocks of fissile material for military purposes in their possession and their nuclear policies. Furthermore, we would like to see greater accountability. We think that the nuclear-weapon States should give a commitment to provide periodically, within the framework of the strengthened review process, a written account of the progress achieved towards the implementation of article VI of the NPT and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 Principles and Objectives. We would also welcome the reduction of warheads and non-strategic nuclear weapons in a transparent and irreversible way. Increased transparency with regard to tactical or non-strategic nuclear weapons could be a first step and would be an important confidence-building measure.

I would like to commend those nuclear-weapons States that already allow for a good degree of transparency. It is my sincere hope that these States will further their efforts to be transparent about their nuclear arsenals. I would like to call on the other relevant States, that possess nuclear weapons, also to become transparent with regard to their nuclear arsenals.

But transparency on nuclear issues not only applies to the "haves"; it also applies to the "have-nots". Concluding additional safeguards with the IAEA is another important way of being transparent. We urge all those States that have not yet signed or ratified such an additional protocol to do so without delay.

Transparency in armaments is one of the so-called non-contested items on the agenda of this Conference. We see no reason whatsoever standing in the way of dealing with this issue in the Conference on Disarmament. I hope what I have just said on this issue demonstrates that we are ready to discuss it with others in this Conference. Right now if you wish.

Outside the realm of the Conference on Disarmament, there are two other issues that my country seeks to promote, because they concern fairly recent developments which have a significant impact on our security.

The first is that of explosive remnants of war in the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. This is not a matter for the Conference on Disarmament as such, and it is not arms control in the strict sense, but part of international humanitarian law. In the midst of more gloomy developments in other multilateral negotiations over the last year it has emerged as one of the more hopeful items for real progress, an early spring flower in a winter landscape. At last year's review conference of the CCW, under the able leadership of Ambassador Les Luck, I was appointed to coordinate this subject under the new president

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

designate for the CCW, Ambassador Rakesh Sood of India. We are determined to carry this process forward as efficiently as we can. Humanitarian suffering is something we need to prevent as much as we can. Civic societies have taken a strong interest, and we must respond to their pleas.

Second, the proliferation of ballistic missiles and missile technology poses a severe threat to our security, because this proliferation is directly related to weapons of mass destruction. The Netherlands is actively supporting work towards a politically binding international code of conduct against missile proliferation. We hope that the code will be finalized and adopted soon, possibly even in 2002. This would be a significant achievement. Some weeks ago, a meeting was held in Paris to discuss the issue. That meeting was attended by more than 80 countries, clear testimony to the urgency of the issue of the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

This Conference has now been deadlocked for about six years, with the minor exception of two weeks of substantive work in 1998. Collectively we have denied ourselves the opportunity to discuss the issues at stake for a number of years now. How long can we let this situation continue while so many important issues need to be dealt with right away? The proposal of Ambassador Amorim may perhaps not be perfectly satisfactory, but it is the best opportunity we have before us. As I have already said, it probably reflects, to the best possible extent, the interests of all member States of this Conference while not compromising any national positions in terms of substance.

Therefore, Mr. President, my delegation is ready to begin substantive work right now.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Ambassador Sverre Bergh Johansen.

Mr. JOHANSEN (Norway): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you upon assuming this important function. My delegation looks forward to working with you.

I am taking the floor on the occasion of the third anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Norway attaches great importance to this Convention, which was negotiated in Oslo and subsequently signed in Ottawa about four years ago. The very short time span between the signing ceremony and entry into force clearly illustrates that the international community saw a clear need for a total ban on anti-personnel mines.

Over the last three years the Convention has proved its added value. There has been a significant reduction in the use of anti-personnel mines and a dramatic drop in the production of these mines. There is an almost complete halt in trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines. The

(Mr. Johansen, Norway)

destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines is moving well ahead. There is increased funding for humanitarian mine action, including victim assistance, and mostly importantly, we are now seeing a notable decline in the number of new mine victims.

This clearly illustrates that the Mine Ban Convention is becoming an international norm, which is working beyond the membership of the Convention.

An increasing number of countries therefore see the relevance of the Convention. There are today 122 States parties to the Convention. We expect the number of States parties to rise beyond 130 by the Fourth Meeting of States parties in September this year. At the United Nations General Assembly last year, 122 countries co-sponsored the resolution supporting the Convention. No other resolution in the First Committee could match that.

In addition, the Ottawa process represents a unique partnership between mine-affected and other countries, between North and South, and between Governments and non-governmental organizations. The process continues to be a constructive, cooperative undertaking that supports a multilateral approach. In that respect we have noticed that several members of the Conference on Disarmament have cited the Mine Ban Convention as an example of a multilateral process which is yielding positive results.

Although considerable progress has been made since the entry into force of the Convention, we are still facing challenges. Anti-personnel mines are still being used in too many conflicts. Societies emerging from war and violence will continue to be plagued by mines. There will be thousands of new victims in the months and years ahead.

Mines are often deployed in the most fertile soil. Anti-personnel mines do not only represent a humanitarian emergency, but also a threat to reconstruction and development. Today, there is much international attention given to the mine challenges in Afghanistan. This is most pertinent. We must not forget, however, that other war-torn countries need international mine action support as well.

Norway intends to respond to such needs. To this end we adhere to our commitment to allocate 120 million United States dollars to mine action over a five-year period. We urge other donor countries to continue - and even to increase - their funding for humanitarian mine action.

There is clearly a need for the Mine Ban Convention. Over the last years, different measures have been taken to improve its functioning. The establishment of the Coordination Committee, and more recently the Implementation Support Unit within the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, underscore our collective will to promote the Convention and its objectives still further.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Norway for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Lint.

Mr. LINT (Belgium) (translation from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on taking over the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You may count on the full cooperation of my delegation in performing your functions. I would also like to say that it is always a pleasure for me to see Mr. Petrovsky and Mr. Dhanapala among us.

As my Netherlands and Norwegian colleagues have said, 1 March 2002 is a particularly important date for the Mine Ban Convention, since it marks the third anniversary of its entry into force, in 1999.

I would today like to focus my statement on the universality of the Convention and participation in the Convention by member States of the Conference. Since I last addressed this Conference, shortly before the Third Meeting of States parties in Managua in September 2001, two member States of the Conference on Disarmament have ratified or acceded to the Convention, namely Algeria and Nigeria, and I would like here to congratulate them accordingly. In all, 37 member States of the Conference on Disarmament are now States parties to the Convention; five members have signed but not yet ratified; and 24 members have not yet acceded to the Convention.

I note encouraging signs of universalization, however. During the intersessional week in January 2002 in Geneva, representatives of Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo informed us that all the necessary steps had been taken for ratification or accession in the near future. In October 2001, in the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia co-sponsored the resolution on anti-personnel mines and thereby sent a clear signal that it was considering early accession to the Convention. I also deem very encouraging the positive votes on that resolution by such signatory countries as Ethiopia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Poland and Ukraine and by countries which have not yet acceded to the Convention, such as Belarus, Finland, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

To date, 122 States have become parties to the Convention and 142 have either signed it, ratified it or acceded to it. It is clear that we now have at our disposal an international norm on the total prohibition of the production, stockpiling, use and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Since the treaty entered into force, the trade in anti-personnel mines has virtually stopped and production has significantly declined. Although there are still 14 producers worldwide, this is 41 fewer than there were on 1 March 1999.

Universality of the Convention and its full implementation are our fundamental objectives and, in this context, I encourage those 51 States which have not signed the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible and I call upon all States to stop using or producing anti-personnel mines, given their disastrous effects in humanitarian and development terms.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Westdal.

Mr. WESTDAL (Canada): Mr. President, I begin with congratulations to you on your current presidency. We are delighted to see you in the chair, and we will help you all we can. I welcome as well Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala. His constant commitment is a pillar of our perseverance and our hope. And I express as well, Mr. President, Canadian respect, gratitude and best wishes for his future to our Secretary-General, Vladimir Petrovsky. He can be rightly proud of a rich career of leadership and achievement.

As has been observed, Mr. President, tomorrow, 1 March 2002, is the third anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I speak now to salute that vital framework for international collaboration against the scourge of landmines.

The success of the Convention in its first three years is heartening. In all, 142 countries have signed or acceded to it. Of these 122 have ratified and others are preparing to do so. For two of our members, Chile and Nigeria, the Ottawa Convention enters into force tomorrow, on the Convention's anniversary, like gifts on a birthday. They are most welcome.

The Convention and its growing number of ratifications have made a real difference. As documented in the Landmine Monitor, the official report of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, there has been a dramatic drop in the number of States which produce and in the overall production of anti-personnel mines, a major decline in the use of these weapons and an almost complete halt to the international trade of anti-personnel mines.

That Landmine Monitor also records that more than 27 million mines have been destroyed in more than 50 countries, and that through concerted international efforts to clear mined land, mine-affected communities in every region of the world are regaining their freedom from fear. Land is safe again for children to play on, for families to farm and for communities to rebuild. While individuals are still hurt and killed by landmines, casualty rates are dropping dramatically in some of the world's most mine-affected countries. In Cambodia, for example, there were one third as many new mine victims in 1999 as there had been in 1996 and the total dropped by another 20 per cent in 2000. The news has been comparably good in States like Bosnia and Mozambique. And real progress is clear in our work for more and better assistance to landmine victims - a daunting task given that most landmine victims live in some of the world's poorest countries.

These achievements reflect the active commitment that the Convention has evoked in States around the world and in a vast range of non-governmental organizations. Developed and developing countries, mine-affected and mine-free, all participate and contribute, together with civil society, in a shared spirit of mutual respect. Canada has disbursed about $78 million to support mine clearance, victim assistance, mine awareness and other initiatives in more than 25 countries in every mine-affected region of the world. Many other countries, including many members of the Conference on Disarmament, have made great contributions to this campaign.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

Yet we should not be too self-congratulatory; our campaign to rid the world of landmines is far from complete. And it is far from easy. Half the countries in the world are infested with landmines. According to Handicap International, the year 2000 saw victims of landmines and unexploded ordnance in at least 77 countries. To cite one example where urgent research is required, we have seen few if any reductions in mine-removal costs (which, of course, far exceed the costs of the mines' production). Simply put, without continuing commitment, the battle against mines will not be won.

Fortunately, our shared commitment seems robust. Intersessional meetings here in Geneva in late January assembled some 300 delegates from States parties as well as from States not yet party to the Convention, along with more than 150 representatives of international and non-governmental organizations. They all worked together to improve aid to victims, mine-clearance, civilian warnings, stockpile reductions and the general operations of the Convention. That work will continue at the next intersessional meetings in May and at the Fourth Meeting of States parties here in September. By that time, we are confident the number of the Convention's States parties will have increased still further.

Mr. President, the Ottawa Convention has proved the value of results-based multilateral diplomacy. It has saved lives, averted miseries, eased pain and suffering and inspired hope and progress around the world. That is not bad for a three-year-old. We wish it a happy birthday, universality, full implementation - and many happy returns.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. SUGONDHABHIROM (Thailand): Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me the opportunity to address this Conference. As this is in fact the first time that Thailand has spoken during your presidency, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of this high office and to express our satisfaction with the way you have ably conducted the Conference.

May I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, for all that he has done for us and to wish him all the best.

I have asked for the floor today to join Canada, Norway and other speakers before me in reiterating the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production, Stockpiling and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, or the Ottawa Convention, on the third anniversary of its entry into force. Since 1999, States parties to the Convention and other partners in the Ottawa process have been successful in creating a new international norm against the use of anti-personnel landmines. The Ottawa Convention has provided a legal framework in which we can work together on mine victim assistance, mine-clearance, stockpile destruction, mine action technology, mine awareness education, and humanitarian, technical and financial assistance for mine-affected developing countries. The Ottawa process has created a strong community of States and civil society organizations willing to cooperate with one another for a good cause. Thailand is proud to be part of that community.

(Mr. Sugondhabhirom, Thailand)

As one of the States parties to the Convention, Thailand remains fully committed to the goals of the Ottawa process and its obligations under the Convention. In this regard, we would like to urge States which have not yet joined the Ottawa Convention to consider joining and to take part in this noble endeavour to make our world safe from anti-personnel mines.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Thailand for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

Distinguished colleagues, as you are aware, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, completes today his term of office and retires. For nine years of his tenure, Mr. Petrovsky has also been closely linked with the Conference on Disarmament as its Secretary-General and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In this capacity, he has discharged his duties with perseverance and authority. Indeed, the Conference on Disarmament has benefited greatly from his experience earned during his long-lasting career as an eminent diplomat of his country and then as a high-ranking official of the United Nations, as well as from his extensive knowledge of the intricacies of arms limitation and disarmament. His persistent efforts in strengthening the role of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating body of the international community and in encouraging it to respond to new challenges with determination and with commensurate imagination have earned him the respect of us all. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, and on my own behalf, I should like to wish Mr. Petrovsky and his family much success and happiness in the future.

It is my privilege to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Mr. President, first of all I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the kind words addressed to me by you and by the delegates who spoke before you. It strikes me as highly symbolic that the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the celebration of the third anniversary of the Ottawa Convention, one of the most important documents produced in the course of 2001, is taking place on my last day of service at the United Nations. Indeed, most of my time during my 45 years of service in diplomacy has been devoted to the promotion of arms limitation and disarmament, not only in words, but - what is more important - in practical deeds.

As has already been mentioned, for the last nine years I have been Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, in whose creation I took part as a Soviet delegate to the General Assembly's first special session on disarmament, in 1978. I have always considered multilateral negotiations, in particular in disarmament, a challenging and uplifting responsibility for those involved in multilateral diplomacy. Today, in a new emerging global society, we can, more than ever before, contribute to the creation of a more secure world.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Multilateral negotiations, which started 70 years ago here in Geneva, have proved that multilateralism, when handled with high professionalism and when based on political will, can bring tangible results. Indeed the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors have forged the most important arms regulations and disarmament regimes in the process of multilateral negotiations.

I am very proud that, during my term, the Conference on Disarmament successfully finalized the Chemical Weapons Convention and commenced, in 1994, negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, concluding it promptly in 1996. The successful conclusion of CTBT in 1996 - after more than 30 years of studies, deliberations and finally negotiations - was a landmark achievement. The Treaty has enhanced security in the world. Its unique and complex verification provisions are both complete and effective. In a broader sense, this mechanism is an example of a legal deterrence to those who do not fulfil their treaty obligations. It is my belief that legal deterrence will be one of the major approaches dealing with arms regulation and disarmament in the future.

In the post-11 September situation the importance of CTBT has become much more prominent. The new strategic environment reinforces the need for States and international bodies to take every possible measure, consistent with the rule of law and with the human values, to assure the safety of citizens and the security of nations. Seen from this standpoint, CTBT is a pillar of the new global security architecture. CTBT is based on and provides strength to the same partnerships and coalitions that are now so essential for fighting terrorism. It is rules-based and contains clear terms for compliance, implementation and verification. It also underscores the principle of preventive action - the greatest assurance of security that we can have now and in the future.

The conclusion of CTBT and CWC has raised the expectations of the international community to an unprecedented level. That is why the slowdown or, as some perceive it, the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmanent - although such a situation has arisen in the past - has provoked a legitimate wave of concern around the world. What has gone wrong? What are the possible remedies? Such questions have been asked before, and are now being asked with increasing emphasis and urgency.

A number of diagnoses have already been offered in this regard. In my opinion, the problem is not the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, its rules of procedure or its decision-making process. Of course, there is always room for improvement in all these areas. The problem, however, is much more complicated and can be attributed to a fundamental divergence of views on disarmament priorities after the end of the cold war. One can also argue that these priorities, relatively stable before, are now undergoing constant changes. One of the driving forces behind this phenomenon is the evolution of a new perception of security, especially in the aftermath of 11 September.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Does this mean that nothing is happening in the Conference on Disarmament? I could not agree with such an assessment. Year after year, even before the start of an annual session, both the current and incoming presidents conduct intensive consultations to strike a balance between different priorities; in other words, they are engaged in preparing the ground for an agreement on a so-called programme of work. In the last few years such an agreement has eluded the Conference, despite endless efforts by the successive presidents and the presentation by them, as well as by a number of States or groups of States, of numerous carefully drafted proposals. You remember that, in 2000, these efforts culminated in a proposal, submitted by Ambassador Amorim of Brazil during his presidency, which has been unanimously regarded as a basis for further consultations on the Conference's programme of work.

In addition, early last year, another breakthrough was made. For the first time in the history of the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors, there is no opposition to the establishing of a subsidiary body - an ad hoc committee - to deal with nuclear disarmament to exchange information and views on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to attain this objective.

Notwithstanding these developments, the main problem facing the Conference, namely, how to start substantive work on a set of issues regarded as priorities by its member States, persists.

In my opinion, the controversies surrounding the outstanding issues remind us, regrettably, of the mentality of the cold war, when all problems were tightly linked and an "all or nothing" rule often guided the negotiations. In the new political situation, which requires recognition of the necessity of solving international issues through multilateral efforts, a new approach is needed, namely, a comprehensive and balanced approach to all priority issues.

I am also convinced that a new tactic should be applied in dealing with these issues. It is important to avoid a situation where progress in one area is made contingent upon progress in another. The relics of the cold war mentality and tactic of linkages should be replaced by constructive parallelism with regard to all priorities on the disarmament agenda. The potential advantage of this approach is that progress in one area can stimulate progress in another. At some point it may be possible to identify whether any of the issues under negotiation are ripe for conclusion in the form of an international legal instrument. We must not forget that treaty-making is the highest and final stage of negotiations, and one that goes beyond mere negotiation. What is required at this stage is the display by all members of the Conference of a spirit of compromise and cooperation which would allow the taking into consideration of the concerns of all.

It is tremendously important that the Conference today includes all militarily significant countries. The Conference also provides ample opportunity not only for multilateral talks but also for bilateral talks and talks among the top disarmament experts representing member States and observers.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Thus, it is not for lack of machinery that we still have so far to go along the path of disarmament. What we are missing is the will to use that machinery. Figuratively speaking, the international community here in Geneva has a road map for disarmament endeavours, with its own highway code and highly skilled drivers: top flight experts, who need no telling how or when to change gear. What we need, in order to move ahead, is for political leaders to unblock the road for the movement in parallel and in all directions towards arms regulation and disarmament.

I believe that, if the necessary political will is to be mobilized, the Conference on Disarmament must be more open to civil society, which plays a proactive role in all disarmament directions. Civil society should be given more opportunities to participate actively and responsibly in our deliberations. Of course, it is true that the rules of procedure of the Conference are not very favourable in this regard, but the search for a solution should be pursued intensively.

In this context, I cannot but highly appreciate the active interaction of UNIDIR, under the able guidance of its Director, Dr. Patricia Lewis, with the Conference on Disarmament, as well as its role in generating political support among civil society for all types of disarmament measures.

I also want to take this opportunity to express my warm and genuine appreciation to my colleagues here. I have immensely enjoyed your comradeship and hospitality and I have learned a great deal from your experience. I value greatly the friendships I have formed during my term in office, and during my whole diplomatic career. I am also very glad to have with us today Under-Secretary-General Mr. Dhanapala, with whom I have worked at different crossroads in the process of disarmament negotiations. Here too, I must stress how highly I value the extraordinary energy and commitment of my Deputy, Mr. Román-Morey, and my colleagues in the secretariat, Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and Mr. Vladimir Bogomolov, who are professionals in the best sense of this term. In addition, the technical support that we receive from our general staff also represents a tremendous contribution to creating a favourable atmosphere for the work of the Conference.

In conclusion, I would like to express my strong belief that all of us who put faith in multilateral cooperation, in international institutions, global norms and a legal framework, who believe in the power of enlightened self-interest, will be able to mobilize the political will to use our machinery and its top expertise. The sooner this happens the better.

What is needed today is action, action, and more action.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to Ambassador Skotnikov, speaking on behalf of the Eastern European Group.

Mr. SKOTNIKOV (Eastern European Group) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and to assure you of our full support. We are delighted today to have with us Mr. Dhanapala and particularly pleased also to see Mr. Petrovsky. I have asked for the floor in order, on behalf of the delegations of the Eastern European Group, to thank Vladimir Petrovsky for the fruitful cooperation that we have enjoyed with him over the many years of his successful service as Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, as Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

As a career diplomat, Mr. Petrovsky devoted 45 years of his life to service in his chosen profession, nine of which he spent at the helm of the Geneva Office of the United Nations. Under his direct stewardship and with his active participation the work of the Office took on new dimension and dynamism.

Mr. Petrovsky is an eminent specialist in international relations and disarmament. As Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this Conference, he made a significant contribution to major successes scored by this unique multilateral negotiating forum. One specific example, and an achievement which we all share, was the elaboration in 1996 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The personal involvement of Mr. Petrovsky in the activities of the Conference on Disarmament and his negotiating experience have helped the Conference sustain a dynamic dialogue and facilitated the search for compromise solutions to the most complex problems which we faced in the work of this forum.

In his work Mr. Petrovsky has been able to achieve a happy combination of professional service with scientific enquiry. As a professor, he is a full member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences and the Academy of Military Sciences and a member of the board of governors of the Geneva Graduate Institute of International Studies and he also cooperates with other Russian and foreign scientific institutions. He is the author of a number of substantial works on international diplomacy and international relations.

Speaking in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation, I would like to recall that Mr. Petrovsky dedicated about 35 years of his life to service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs first of the Soviet Union and then of Russia. He rose through the ranks to become First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. All those who worked with him in Moscow - and I personally was fortunate to have that privilege - well recall the energy with which Mr. Petrovsky tackled the work which was so dear to him. His knowledge and experience were always keenly sought after in the diplomatic circles of our country.

Vladimir Petrovich, may I wish you the best of health and happiness and further success in your many activities.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation, who spoke also on behalf of the Eastern European Group, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Mora Godoy, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I have addressed the Conference under your leadership, I would like to convey to you our congratulations on your assumption of this distinguished office and to reassure you of our support and cooperation in your performance of your functions.

It is a great honour for me personally to take the floor at this stage to bid farewell to a dear friend, an outstanding colleague and a distinguished professor, Vladimir Petrovsky, and I say "personally", because it was in New York, at the very start of my own diplomatic career, that I first met him and experienced the benefit of his support, his friendship and his wise counsel, which were invaluable and enduring.

On behalf of the Group of 21, which it is my honour to coordinate this month, I wish to express our gratitude and our best wishes to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who is ending his functions as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Geneva. I may assure him that we, the member countries of this forum, have all benefited from the great experience and knowledge of disarmament affairs and arms control which Mr. Petrovsky gained over his long diplomatic career, first as an esteemed representative of his country and subsequently as a high official of the United Nations, the Organization which he has served with a professionalism, loyalty and impartiality which should be emulated by all its staff members.

He has always been available to provide timely guidance, wise words and practical assistance, so as to strengthen the role of this Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. His daily activities performed for the benefit of peace and international security and the achievements of his professional life merit our deepest respect and commend him to our friendship. On behalf of the Group of 21 may I reiterate our best wishes to Mr. Petrovsky and his family for their future happiness and success.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Luck, who will speak on behalf of the Western Group.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): Mr. President, this is my first opportunity to congratulate you since you assumed the important role of leading our work and I do so. It is also good to see our friend and colleague, Mr. Dhanapala, here from New York. We welcome you very much in our presence once again.

Mr. President, I would like to join others in expressing the appreciation of all delegations in the Western Group for the contribution that Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky has made to this Conference over the past nine years.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

Mr. Petrovsky has served as Secretary-General of the Conference, as others have noted, and as Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference since October 1993. During the same period he has also had a significant additional responsibility through his position as Director-General of the United Nations Office here in Geneva.

We have been very appreciative of Mr. Petrovsky's leadership of the Conference and the Conference secretariat, which has consistently and ably supported the work of Governments in the Conference and also our work on related arms control and disarmament negotiations here in Geneva. He has been very active and proactive in fostering efforts by the community of Governments and also of other players, non-governmental organizations, here in Geneva to try and advance our work. We have been very conscious of the encouragement and the very positive impetus that he has given to that process and also of his acknowledgement of the role of women and promotion of the role that some of our women colleagues might play in our work.

He has brought a perspective to our work which reflects his wealth of diplomatic experience, from his service both on behalf of his own country, of course, but also within the United Nations itself.

We thank him very much for his committed and constructive ideas, which have helped stimulate the work of this Conference. While much has been done and achieved under his stewardship, we have a sense that he would share a little of our disappointment that it has not been possible to achieve more in recent years.

Mr. President, we will be sad to see Mr. Petrovsky leave us and we wish him and his wife well in their future endeavours.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Hu.

Mr. HU (China): Mr. President, first of all allow me on behalf of my delegation to pay tribute to the distinguished Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Vladimir Petrovsky. I convey our heartfelt thanks to him for the significant contribution and the untiring efforts that he has made over the years to promote the process of international disarmament and arms control in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. During his term of office he has discharged his responsibilities in an outstanding manner. My delegation and I myself fully associate ourselves with the statements of praise addressed to Mr. Petrovsky by you, Mr. President, and by the representatives of various groups.

During his term of office a number of successes were scored by the Conference on Disarmament, such as the fashioning of the CWC and the negotiation and conclusion of the CTBT. These all benefited from the wealth of diplomatic experience and outstanding skills of

(Mr. Hu, China)

Mr. Petrovsky. Whenever the Conference on Disarmament has been confronted with difficulties and setbacks Mr. Petrovsky has always worked hard and in a positive spirit with all delegations to ensure that the Conference can commence its work as quickly as possible.

The Chinese delegation has enjoyed happy and fruitful cooperation with Mr. Petrovsky and the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament. It has been a great pleasure for me personally and for my delegation to have the opportunity to work with Mr. Petrovsky. During both my terms of service in Geneva I have been fortunate enough to have had excellent cooperation with Mr. Petrovsky and have benefited from his assistance and advice. His departure will leave us with a rich store of excellent memories. Speaking on my own behalf and on that of my delegation, I would like to convey our sincere regret at his departure. Finally, I convey our heartfelt wishes to Mr. Petrovsky and his family for their health, happiness and success in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I see none. I now wish to give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, who will speak on behalf of the Conference secretariat.

Mr. ROMAN-MOREY (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): On behalf of the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I should like to express our gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, for the outstanding accomplishment of his functions as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and for the invaluable guidance and professional assistance that he has rendered so generously to the secretariat of the Conference.

During his term of office, Mr. Petrovsky has always shared with us his outstanding diplomatic experience and his vast knowledge on arms limitation and disarmament. His creative vision of the evolution of international security has assisted the secretariat in providing the Conference with professional services and with sound and impartial advice. We will miss him as a professional team leader as well as a distinguished colleague. On my own behalf, let me stress to Mr. Petrovsky that it has been an honour to share with him common efforts in the field of arms control and disarmament.

It only remains for me to convey to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament our best wishes for happiness, good health and still more success in his new life.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference for his statement.

Distinguished colleagues, as I indicated at the beginning of our plenary meeting this morning, I should now like to proceed to the question of the appointment of special coordinators to fill the posts established in decision CD/1667, taken by the Conference on 14 February 2002.

I am happy to report that significant progress has been made. The consultations that I have undertaken in this regard have resulted in the following allocations of responsibility.

(The President)

For the duration of the 2002 session of the Conference, the Western Group will handle the review of the agenda of the Conference. The Group has designated Ambassador Chung of the Republic of Korea as special coordinator.

The Group of 21 will handle the question of improved and effective functioning of the Conference. The Group has designated Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka as special coordinator.

The Eastern European Group will handle expansion of the membership of the Conference. Consultations within the Group are continuing with a view to the designation of the special coordinator.

In those circumstances, I propose that we defer a formal decision until our next plenary meeting.

Extensive consultations are continuing on the programme of work.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 7 March 2002, at 10 a.m. Since this will be the eve of International Women's Day, the Conference will, in accordance with previous practice, receive a message from the various women's non-governmental organizations active in the field of disarmament.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.896
7 March 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 March 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Fisseha Yimer (Ethiopia) (Egypt)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 896th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to the Minister of National Defence of Romania, His Excellency Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, who will address the Conference. His presence among us today will no doubt contribute to our efforts to forge an agreement on the programme of work of the Conference. I am sure that his address will be followed with keen interest and attention.

I would also take this opportunity to welcome the representatives of non-governmental organizations who are with us today. As you know, International Women's Day will be celebrated tomorrow and, to mark this event, in accordance with established practice, the participants in the annual International Women's Day seminar have addressed a message to the Conference. I am certain that the Conference joins me in expressing our best wishes to all women present here today, and our appreciation of their constant commitment to peace and disarmament, as well as of their continuing interest in our work.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, Minister of National Defence of Romania.

Mr. PASCU (Romania): I want to thank you all for this opportunity. I am an academic and during my first years of work I studied the work of your body. At that time, I was merely observing and, to be frank with you, I never imagined that one day I would speak in front of you. I therefore thank you sincerely for giving me this opportunity, which I deeply appreciate.

Mr. President, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I would like to assure you and successive presidents throughout this annual session of the full support of the delegation of Romania. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate your predecessors for their intensive and constructive efforts aimed at moving the work of the Conference forward and for the adoption of the relevant decision on the reappointment of the three special coordinators on procedural issues of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would also like to express special appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who retired recently after serving for almost a decade as Secretary-General of the Conference. His name will remain closely linked with past achievements of the Conference on Disarmament, including the, finalization of the CTBT negotiations. My special thanks also go to Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, and to the other capable members of the secretariat for their constant and invaluable support to the Conference.

Last year was a particularly difficult one for the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process, especially with regard to the regimes on weapons of mass destruction, and also as a result of the rapid evolution of international security and stability.

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

Providing the Biological Weapons Convention with a compliance regime proved to be more difficult than expected five years earlier, in spite of the important efforts by the delegations in the Ad Hoc Group. The suspension of the BWC Review Conference last year provides the State parties with a more than necessary period of time for reflection. Serious and responsible thinking is necessary on the ways ahead for this exercise and for working out a set of balanced and interlocking multilateral international and domestic measures capable of ensuring the full operation of the Convention.

I believe it is clear that the complexity of the issue of biological weapons and the national security, economic and social interests of the States parties necessitate a much broader approach, which goes beyond agreeing upon a stand-alone legal instrument for compliance. Such a compliance instrument must fit into a whole larger set of other international multilateral agreements concluded and functioning outside the disarmament framework.

The brutal attacks against the United States of America marked the transformation and emergence of terrorism, especially State-supported terrorism, into a real and dangerous threat of global dimensions, affecting the security interests of all the members of the international community, including my own country.

As terrorist organizations and networks have proved to be more global in action, employing the highest technology in their operations, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups has become a major objective for us all.

I have chosen to start this analysis of developments in the current international security environment with a focus on BWC issues and the terrorist global threat, in view of the rapid and spectacular developments in efforts to establish the international coalition against terrorism. Romania joined the coalition immediately after the 11 September 2001 attacks and, since then, has sought to bring a responsible and reliable contribution to this exercise.

The international coalition is an outstanding demonstration of broad multilateral international solidarity, cooperation and political will, based upon joint efforts to provide, in a very short period of time, specific measures to be enforced at both the international and domestic levels. This is an important lesson to keep in mind when approaching a future international multilateral compliance regime for the BWC and other agreements in the field of disarmament.

The time has come to bring the process of disarmament and the non-proliferation of armaments closer to other fields of multilateral diplomacy and to bring it into step with the rapid developments set in motion by the globalization process.

This brings me to the current legal framework of multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, which for decades have provided the tools for crafting a long-standing contribution to international peace and security. Most of these, if not all, brought

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

a tangible contribution to global security when adopted and entered into force. Each of them laid the foundations for negotiating and further adopting multilateral international disarmament agreements. This is after all the essence of the sometimes painful and almost invariably slow process of disarmament.

Romania is firmly attached to the multilateral framework of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements at both the global and regional levels and will continue to implement in good faith the obligations assumed under the existing legal regimes to which it is a State party. My country is a State party to all major international multilateral treaties governing the issue of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as to the Ottawa Convention, the Open Skies Treaty, the CFE Treaty and other regional multilateral and bilateral agreements on confidence and security-building measures.

Our attachment to collective security is unconditional and we cannot agree with those seeking to abandon multilateralism in international security. Indeed, the history of disarmament shows that changing international conditions could erode the relevance of an international instrument, but the international community remains obliged, in accordance with its responsibilities, to replace such an instrument with agreements able to address the current and future security concerns of all its members. Accordingly, we find merit in the arguments in favour of the need to strengthen and, if necessary, to adapt existing agreements in line with present realities, while remaining engaged in efforts to negotiate and conclude new multilateral international agreements in the field of disarmament.

Accountable compliance and the strict observation of existing obligations are basic prerequisites for a healthy climate conducive to negotiations for new collective security agreements or the adaptation of the existing ones. Universal adherence must remain a constant objective for the multilateral agreements currently in force.

Many distinguished speakers who have recently addressed this sole body for negotiations of multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control have also pointed out the positive developments of last year. Indeed, the decision to extend the scope of the CCW to armed conflicts other than international conflicts and the recent entry into force of the Open Skies Treaty are relevant steps forward, and Romania will continue to be actively engaged in their implementation.

This year Romania will ratify the amendment to article 1 of the CCW, together with Amended Protocol II and Protocol IV to that Convention. It will also pursue an active contribution to the Ottawa Convention process during the period leading up to the first deadlines for full implementation of the article 4 provisions. We are ready to contribute to the Open Skies Treaty, with our long-standing experience gained over a decade of implementing the Romanian-Hungarian bilateral agreement and in many trial flights performed with neighbouring and other countries.

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

We recognize also the important contribution to multilateral security of bilateral agreements aimed at reducing arsenals of offensive nuclear strategic weapons and welcome the recent decision of the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation to engage in talks for deep cuts of existing arsenals. In our view, this is a positive development that outlines, once more, the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States for improving international security and strategic stability.

While pointing out these positive results, allow me also to draw attention to the fact that they have all been achieved outside the Conference on Disarmament.

In the last three years the Conference has not lived up to its main task, and the continuation of the present state of affairs will only further undermine the credibility of this unique multilateral body. And all of this, despite important efforts embodied in a long row of presidential proposals to tackle the divergent items of the programme of work. The sorry result of this sterile, but time and nerve-consuming exercise is that the start of negotiations on FMCT is still wishful thinking years after the adoption of the Shannon mandate and only a few weeks ahead of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

The rapid adoption of the decision on the reappointment of the three special coordinators on procedural issues is an encouraging signal for the Conference, but it does not replace substantive work on the items of the programme of work, which is the main task of this body.

The Romanian position at the Conference on Disarmament has not changed over the last year and the resumption of the negotiations for FMCT remains a priority for our delegation. We are not in favour, as a position of principle, to any linkage between the items of the programme of work.

On the proposals for the programme of work contained in document CD/1624, tabled during the presidency of Ambassador Amorim of Brazil, our position is flexible. Like many other delegations we can endorse them as such.

My delegation stands ready to participate in a debate concerning the issue of transparency in armaments, one of the non-controversial items of the programme of work. We are witnessing a time when the multiplication of internal conflicts and crises provides ground for the emergence and consolidation of non-traditional threats which tend to take shape as a complex combination of terrorism, ethnic cleansing, organized crime and arms trafficking. Past and recent experiences show that the worst affected categories are the civilian population and the international personnel providing humanitarian assistance and engaged in peacekeeping operations.

In view of the current international situation, it is imperative that we resume the debate on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament in order to prepare the ground for future international instruments intended to ensure the restraint and responsibility both of producers and end-users, while providing for equal and undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments.

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

I would like here to avail myself of this opportunity to appeal to all delegations to increase their participation in the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms, as well as in standardized reporting on military matters and transparency on military expenditures, in line with United Nations General Assembly resolutions 56/14 and 56/24 Q. In our view, the Conference on Disarmament needs to start substantive work immediately on the so-called non-controversial items, while continuing consultations for a consensual solution to the other remaining items.

Mr. President, as we all know, the Conference on Disarmament is a fine-tuned barometer, very sensitive to international security developments and to the political climate that obtains between key actors on the international stage. Romania, like many other members of the Conference on Disarmament, has approached the current annual session with many expectations for real progress in moving this body out of its stalemate that has already endured far too long.

This delegation continues to believe in the future of multilateral international disarmament and the value of the Conference on Disarmament for international peace and security. We are committed to working closely with all delegations to this end.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister of National Defence of Romania for his address and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I should now like to call on the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, to read out the message of the International Women's Day seminar to the Conference.

Mr. ROMAN-MOREY (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Before I have the honour to read the message to the Conference on Disarmament presented by the International Women's Day seminar, please allow me, in the name of the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, to present our warmest congratulations to all women of the world on the occasion of International Women's Day to be celebrated tomorrow, 8 March 2002.

I shall now proceed to read the message.

"Distinguished Members of the Conference on Disarmament, thank you for giving the annual International Women's Day seminar the opportunity to address you on the occasion of International Women's Day. This day, which actually falls tomorrow, 8 March, has its roots in the centuries-old struggle of women for the right to participate equally with men in making the decisions that determine the economic and social conditions of our societies and concern the question of war or peace. For decades now, women have seen ever more clearly, and particularly those living in regions of conflict, how necessary peace and disarmament are to improving their working and living conditions and the achievement of gender equality. They see disarmament as a necessary means to limit conflict and prevent war, and to free resources to make possible the improvement of economic and social conditions for themselves, their families and their communities.

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"Both females and males need and have a right to a stable and secure environment; women and their children in particular need resources for the full development of their potential. In turn, the fulfilment of their potential will strengthen security and stability for all, and they will contribute still more to the wealth of nations. In this spirit we wish to say here today the following.

"When we addressed this Conference on 8 March last year, we believed that you would break the stalemate that had beset this negotiating forum for several years. We were confident that the conditions were such that would allow you to proceed with the work plan set out in document CD/1624 of 24 August 2000 - the Amorim proposal. We are deeply disappointed and much concerned that today, one year later, the Conference remains deadlocked. From what we heard and read then and what we hear and read now, there is agreement that document CD/1624 is a good basis for consultations with a view to advancing disarmament talks and negotiations. Why then does the deadlock in this forum persist when there is such an obvious need for talks and genuine negotiations on nuclear disarmament, for preventing an arms race in outer space, and for a treaty on fissile material cut-off, as well as for a comprehensive programme for disarmament? Civil society has a right to an answer from this Conference. Disarmament issues are of concern to all people; not only to Governments and civil servants. The issue of what kind of security is everyone's concern, and to be informed is the people's democratic right.

"Following the terrible events of 11 September in the United States of America, the international community rallied to the United States to join it in its response to the terrorist acts. Taking this collective stand kindled hopes for a return to genuine multilateral disarmament efforts. But the opposite is happening: the response to terrorism is primarily manifested in military terms, resulting in demands for increased military expenditures to develop and produce more and newer arms; the insistence on developing a missile defence system risks setting off a new arms race and undermining a long-standing disarmament treaty. Sophisticated weaponry cannot protect us against these new kinds of terrorist acts. Perhaps a better use and sharing of resources to improve peoples' lives would be a more effective means of eliminating terrorism.

"Addressing the United Nations Symposium on Terrorism and Disarmament in New York last October, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, called for a common strategy in the disarmament area to deal with the global challenge of eradicating terrorism. He pointed out that 'weapons-based security not only perpetuated the wrong value system internationally, it also increased weapon stocks and the danger of their diversion to non-State actors and individual warlords with calamitous consequences. The increasing number and sophistication of weaponry and expensive defence systems would not protect us from terrorism, just as the

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

derogation from fundamental human rights could not be justified by the fight against terrorism. Disarmament and non-proliferation norms contributed to the battle against terrorism. He stressed that short-term expediency should not lead us to compromise on them, because they would eventually feed terrorism as we had seen from the legacy of the cold war'.

"Everything in the world demands that all States, but in particular the Member States of the Conference on Disarmament, work together to prevent the eruption of a new arms race. Our planet cannot bear it. Money-wise, we can hardly afford the safe destruction of the weaponry that has been agreed to be destroyed. Let us not build more.

"We are concerned by the trend to pull out of or dismiss as outdated international treaties, such as the ABM Treaty, or to refuse to ratify treaties negotiated with patience over long periods of time, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are deeply disappointed that the lengthy negotiations of a Protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention came to naught.

"We fear that the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to break the deadlock and begin genuine talks and negotiations in accordance with a generally acceptable work plan may have very negative repercussions on the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We fear that the Conference on Disarmament may have become incapable of fulfilling its mandate. What then is the future of disarmament? What is the future of this negotiating forum? We know that there have been periods in the past when the Conference on Disarmament (in its earlier form) was deadlocked. But this does not excuse the lack of movement today when conflicts multiply and arms kill thousands of innocent civilians and whole sectors of populations are massacred, individuals continue to be maimed by landmines still embedded in the soil, and the fear of the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors grows. We understand fully that the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating forum, but we must not forget that it deals in essence with very human and humanitarian issues. Knowing how women live in these many conflicts, we cannot help but be impatient at what seems to us to be a lack of a sense of urgency in coming to grips with disarmament and non-proliferation in the interests of all humanity.

"Having stated this, we agree with, and join the delegates to the Conference who, while deploring the deadlock in this forum, have given recognition to positive developments in arms control and non-proliferation concerning small arms and light weapons, landmines and implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are also encouraged by the commitment of Governments to continued work on strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention and strengthening of the NPT.

"We are gratified that the Conference has decided again to appoint special coordinators on the review of the agenda of the Conference, on the expansion of its membership and on its improved and effective functioning. An agenda set in 1978 may

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

well need some updating. As for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, we express our hope that the issue of the relationship of non-governmental organizations to the Conference on Disarmament will be seriously taken up during this session. In a letter addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament at the start of this session, the President of the Geneva-based NGO Committee for Disarmament expressed the desire of non-governmental organizations to meet the special coordinator to discuss how, in an appropriate way, non-governmental organizations might fruitfully contribute to the deliberations concerning this relationship. We fully support his proposals.

"Distinguished members of the Conference, it is early on in this 2002 session and we maintain our optimism that you will overcome the present stalemate. In this connection we wish to recall the final paragraph of the United Nations Secretary-General's statement to the opening meeting of this year's first session of the Conference on Disarmament: 'The United Nations General Assembly unanimously reaffirmed multilateralism as a core principle in negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Assembly also emphasized the need for progress in multilateral cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation, to contribute to global efforts against terrorism. It is my sincere hope that this Conference will respond to these challenges with dynamism and determination.' We share his hope.

"From this year's international women's seminar, at which we looked at terrorism, the global order, arms and missile defence, we call on you, we urge you to act now, in the common interest of all citizens on this planet. It is time to come to grips with the proliferation of arms and take a decisive step toward disarmament. We wish you strength in your work."

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, for reading the message of the seminar. I now give the floor to the coordinator of the Group of 21, Ambassador Mora Godoy of Cuba.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to express our appreciation for the important message from the non-governmental organization community on the occasion of International Women's Day. Our group would like to convey its gratitude and respect to those organizations for the sustained support which they have given to the Conference on Disarmament, as well as to recognize the very valuable contributions that they have traditionally brought to the cause of general and complete disarmament and, therefore to the attainment of international peace and security, as has just been demonstrated in the message read out to us by the Deputy Secretary-General.

The members of the Group of 21 appreciate highly the role played by women in all spheres of life and, particularly, in the international movement for peace. Women, with their special sensitivity, have always been able to rise to the challenges that we face in attaining the

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

objectives of international disarmament and world peace. It is therefore an honour today for us to be able to convey our own message of congratulations to all the women of the world and, especially, to those distinguished colleagues who have previously formed and who currently form part of the delegations which participate on a daily basis in our efforts in pursuit of disarmament.

We also extend these congratulations to all women members of those non-governmental organizations which, once again, with their statement have given us encouragement and hope and have urged us to step up our efforts to achieve a world free of all weapons, especially nuclear weapons.

Our most sincere congratulations also go to our female colleagues in the interpretation booths and in the secretariat who are facilitating our own work and communication. We would like to convey to all of them our congratulations and best wishes for their good health, and our hope that through our common endeavours, we may succeed in the not too distant future in turning the world into a place of peace and security for the good of humankind.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the coordinator of the Group of 21 for his statement, and I now give the floor to the coordinator of the Western Group, Ambassador Luck of Australia.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): Mr. President, on behalf of the Western Group, it is my pleasure to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all representatives of non-governmental organizations with us today on International Women's Day. I would like to thank the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women for their coordination of the joint non-governmental organization statement just read out to us by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

We have listened with great interest to the views expressed in the joint statement, and agree that the world faces important security, arms control and disarmament challenges in a rapidly changing strategic environment. Indeed, world expectations for progress at the Conference are high. Now more than ever the Conference needs to act. And yet, we find ourselves continuing to share the disappointment and frustration expressed at the ongoing deadlock in the Conference. We can no longer afford for this to happen - the Conference must start work. Accordingly, the Western Group joins in the statement's call to the Conference to adopt a programme of work immediately. And, to this end, the Western Group stands ready to commence negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty, and also to address other key agenda items.

Finally, on behalf of the Western Group, I would like to pay tribute to the representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations present here today for promoting the cause of disarmament and a culture of peace and understanding. And I would like to reassure all representatives that this is and remains our common goal and our highest priority.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the coordinator of the Western Group for his statement. I now give the floor to Mr. Antonov, representative of the Russian Federation, who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European Group.

Mr. ANTONOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, allow me, on behalf of the Eastern European Group, to thank the representatives of the international non-governmental organizations for their traditional annual statement on the occasion of International Women's Day, which has just been read to us by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Román-Moray. I would also like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Group, our very best wishes to the women representing the non-governmental organizations and also those women who are heads and members of delegations here at the Conference on Disarmament, the director of UNIDIR and her female colleagues, and the women working in the secretariat and as interpreters, on the occasion of tomorrow's holiday. We are grateful to you all for your invaluable support and participation in our work.

The contribution of women to the campaign for general and complete disarmament and international stability is immense. We are grateful to them for their ever greater efforts in this area and we remain convinced that our joint endeavours both within the Conference on Disarmament and beyond its confines will enable us to ensure that the world in which we live is a safer and more tranquil place, for the benefit of all humankind.

On behalf of the member delegations of the Eastern European Group and of its observers, I wish our dear women colleagues the very best of health, happiness and well-being. I wish you every success in the difficult task that we face together.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Tomorrow is International Women's Day. Please allow me, at the outset, to extend the congratulations and best wishes of the Chinese delegation to all women colleagues present among us, to the representatives of women's organizations and to women staff-members of the secretariat. I have just listened attentively to the message from the women's organizations and would like to express my appreciation for their concern for the cause of disarmament and the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the World Conference on International Women's Year, held in Mexico in 1975, all Governments were urged "to provide women with equal opportunities with men to represent their countries in all international forums where the issues of international peace and cooperation are discussed and in particular in the meetings of the organizations of the United Nations and all conferences on disarmament and international peace and other regional bodies". It is gratifying to note that certain steps have already been taken towards that goal. Please permit me on this occasion to pay special tribute to all women diplomats present here. The participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament by an ever greater number of women is evidence of the longing for peace and growing concern about the Conference on the part of the international community, including women. Many thanks to you all!

(Mr. Hu, China)

Women not only embody such properties as tenderness, kindness and beauty, they also represent the great quality of maternal love that embraces the entire human race. For a variety of reasons women, more often than not, are the most vulnerable group in society and the direct victims of wars and armed conflicts. Today, women in many parts of the world are being subjected to untold suffering precisely because of war and are therefore all the more anxious for the international community to maintain world peace and security through its multilateral efforts. As one route for the attainment of this cherished ideal is through the pursuit of disarmament, it is only natural that women from all countries should be extensively concerned about and involved in disarmament efforts. The 1975 Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace urged that women as well as men should promote real, general and complete disarmament under effective international control, starting with the nuclear disarmament. It is heartening to note that, over the ensuing 20 years and more, the international community has responded to that appeal by setting in place a relatively comprehensive legal system governing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and fashioned this into an important safeguard guaranteeing international and regional peace and stability. It is essential now that this legal system be maintained, consolidated, strengthened and further developed and not weakened or damaged in any way.

In 1995, in the Beijing Declaration adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, women from all over the world expressed their determination to work actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control and to support negotiations and the conclusion, without delay, of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable, comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which contributed to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. Thanks to the strenuous efforts of all member States, that treaty has now been concluded and is open for signature. Today, however, we cannot but be worried that such a hard-won treaty has been rejected and its future looks gloomy. The goal of the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons, the cherished hope of women the world over, is still far from being attained. The negative development to which I alluded earlier epitomizes the severe problems faced by the process of the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and also bears witness to the abiding unstable and insecure state of our planet. We call upon the entire membership of the Conference on Disarmament to jettison the cold war mentality and to strengthen dialogue and cooperation, in the interest of promoting universal security and accomplishing development for all.

As we look forward to the festivity shared by the women of the world, may I reaffirm the readiness of the Chinese delegation to join all women in their untiring efforts to promote disarmament and to safeguard peace.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

Distinguished colleagues, I would now like to proceed to the appointment of the officers to fill the posts of special coordinators established in decision CD/1667 taken by the Conference at its 893rd plenary meeting on 14 February 2002.

(The President)

It is my pleasure to inform the Conference that all groups have now nominated their candidates to assume these posts and, therefore, the Conference is now ready to appoint, for the duration of its 2002 session, the following officers: Ambassador Eui-Yong Chung of the Republic of Korea as special coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference; Ambassador Dimiter Tzantchev of Bulgaria as special coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference; and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka as special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference.

In this connection, I should like to emphasize that this agreement has been reached on the understanding that the proposed distribution of posts is applicable only to the 2002 session of the Conference and that, in the future, the principle of rotation of the posts of special coordinators as well as of all other tasks and responsibilities in the Conference shall be respected in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

With this understanding, may I take it that the Conference agrees to these appointments?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to extend our sincere congratulations to Ambassador Chung, Ambassador Tzantchev and Ambassador Kariyawasam on their appointment and to wish them every success in discharging their important responsibilities. At the same time, I would like to urge the newly appointed special coordinators to embark on their tasks as early as possible, so that they can report on their findings before the conclusion of the 2002 session, as provided for in decision CD/1667.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

Distinguished colleagues, since the third week of my presidency is coming to an end, I would like to present to you a brief report on the consultations that I have undertaken during that period.

My immediate task, as the President was to build upon the achievements of my predecessor, Mr. Tawfik of Egypt, who forged consensus on the re-establishment of the posts of three special coordinators on the review of the agenda of the Conference, on the expansion of its membership and on its improved and effective functioning.

Accordingly, I started my tenure with consultations, involving all the regional coordinators and China, on the nomination of candidates for these posts. As usual in such cases, the main assumption on which I based my consultations was the need for ensuring that a balanced geographical representation among the office-holders was maintained. Other requirements in this regard, some of which had also been raised earlier at the plenary meetings, were reiterated by the coordinators during my consultations. On the one hand, there were views that the distribution of these posts should be subject to rotation among various groups, as had been the case in the past when nominations rotated among the various groups, usually every session. On the other hand, views were expressed that, to the extent possible, the special

(The President)

coordinators nominated last year should be allowed to continue their work since in 2001 they were nominated towards the end of the session and, therefore, were not able to conclude their mandated assignments.

Today, thanks to your spirit of accommodation and cooperation, these consultations have been concluded successfully and the three newly appointed special coordinators are ready, as decided now, to proceed to the implementation of their respective mandates.

From the very beginning, I have also undertaken parallel consultations with the regional coordinators and China on possible ways and means of facilitating consensus on the programme of work of the Conference. It goes without saying that I have based these consultations on the work done by my predecessors. Thus far, I have not detected any considerable changes in the positions of the various groups that would allow us to focus on elaborating specific proposals for making progress. The general findings of my predecessors have not changed; there is still an understanding among the various groups that the proposal on the programme of work contained in document CD/1624 is regarded as a basis for further consultations. On the other hand, at the plenary meetings held during this session, we have witnessed some encouraging developments in the national positions of a number of member States. You will recall that some member States have expressed their readiness to adopt the proposed programme of work in its present form. In addition, we have heard the reconfirmation of previous statements which clearly indicate that the subsidiary bodies envisaged in document CD/1624 for various agenda items are now, in principle, acceptable to all. It is my duty, however, to emphasize at the same time that there are still substantial differences of views with regard to the mandates of the subsidiary bodies on nuclear disarmament and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. With your kind cooperation, I am willing to use the remaining time of my presidency to explore further this aspect of the programme of work.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize once again the need for the continuation of the business-like dialogue among the members of the Conference at the plenary meetings. The 2002 session has been marked, so far, by the renewed interest of member States to use this mechanism - in fact one of the many such mechanisms available to us at this stage - to advance the work of the Conference.

I sincerely hope that this trend continues.

Before we adjourn the meeting, I should like to request a meeting with the group coordinators after the adjournment of this meeting, in room I, our usual room.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 14 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.896*
7 March 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHTH HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 March 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Fisseha Yimer (Ethiopia)

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* Re-issued for technical reasons.

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 896th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to the Minister of National Defence of Romania, His Excellency Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, who will address the Conference. His presence among us today will no doubt contribute to our efforts to forge an agreement on the programme of work of the Conference. I am sure that his address will be followed with keen interest and attention.

I would also take this opportunity to welcome the representatives of non-governmental organizations who are with us today. As you know, International Women's Day will be celebrated tomorrow and, to mark this event, in accordance with established practice, the participants in the annual International Women's Day seminar have addressed a message to the Conference. I am certain that the Conference joins me in expressing our best wishes to all women present here today, and our appreciation of their constant commitment to peace and disarmament, as well as of their continuing interest in our work.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ioan Mircea Pascu, Minister of National Defence of Romania.

Mr. PASCU (Romania): I want to thank you all for this opportunity. I am an academic and during my first years of work I studied the work of your body. At that time, I was merely observing and, to be frank with you, I never imagined that one day I would speak in front of you. I therefore thank you sincerely for giving me this opportunity, which I deeply appreciate.

Mr. President, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I would like to assure you and successive presidents throughout this annual session of the full support of the delegation of Romania. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate your predecessors for their intensive and constructive efforts aimed at moving the work of the Conference forward and for the adoption of the relevant decision on the reappointment of the three special coordinators on procedural issues of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would also like to express special appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who retired recently after serving for almost a decade as Secretary-General of the Conference. His name will remain closely linked with past achievements of the Conference on Disarmament, including the, finalization of the CTBT negotiations. My special thanks also go to Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, and to the other capable members of the secretariat for their constant and invaluable support to the Conference.

Last year was a particularly difficult one for the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process, especially with regard to the regimes on weapons of mass destruction, and also as a result of the rapid evolution of international security and stability.

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

Providing the Biological Weapons Convention with a compliance regime proved to be more difficult than expected five years earlier, in spite of the important efforts by the delegations in the Ad Hoc Group. The suspension of the BWC Review Conference last year provides the State parties with a more than necessary period of time for reflection. Serious and responsible thinking is necessary on the ways ahead for this exercise and for working out a set of balanced and interlocking multilateral international and domestic measures capable of ensuring the full operation of the Convention.

I believe it is clear that the complexity of the issue of biological weapons and the national security, economic and social interests of the States parties necessitate a much broader approach, which goes beyond agreeing upon a stand-alone legal instrument for compliance. Such a compliance instrument must fit into a whole larger set of other international multilateral agreements concluded and functioning outside the disarmament framework.

The brutal attacks against the United States of America marked the transformation and emergence of terrorism, especially State-supported terrorism, into a real and dangerous threat of global dimensions, affecting the security interests of all the members of the international community, including my own country.

As terrorist organizations and networks have proved to be more global in action, employing the highest technology in their operations, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups has become a major objective for us all.

I have chosen to start this analysis of developments in the current international security environment with a focus on BWC issues and the terrorist global threat, in view of the rapid and spectacular developments in efforts to establish the international coalition against terrorism. Romania joined the coalition immediately after the 11 September 2001 attacks and, since then, has sought to bring a responsible and reliable contribution to this exercise.

The international coalition is an outstanding demonstration of broad multilateral international solidarity, cooperation and political will, based upon joint efforts to provide, in a very short period of time, specific measures to be enforced at both the international and domestic levels. This is an important lesson to keep in mind when approaching a future international multilateral compliance regime for the BWC and other agreements in the field of disarmament.

The time has come to bring the process of disarmament and the non-proliferation of armaments closer to other fields of multilateral diplomacy and to bring it into step with the rapid developments set in motion by the globalization process.

This brings me to the current legal framework of multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, which for decades have provided the tools for crafting a long-standing contribution to international peace and security. Most of these, if not all, brought

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

a tangible contribution to global security when adopted and entered into force. Each of them laid the foundations for negotiating and further adopting multilateral international disarmament agreements. This is after all the essence of the sometimes painful and almost invariably slow process of disarmament.

Romania is firmly attached to the multilateral framework of international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements at both the global and regional levels and will continue to implement in good faith the obligations assumed under the existing legal regimes to which it is a State party. My country is a State party to all major international multilateral treaties governing the issue of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as to the Ottawa Convention, the Open Skies Treaty, the CFE Treaty and other regional multilateral and bilateral agreements on confidence and security-building measures.

Our attachment to collective security is unconditional and we cannot agree with those seeking to abandon multilateralism in international security. Indeed, the history of disarmament shows that changing international conditions could erode the relevance of an international instrument, but the international community remains obliged, in accordance with its responsibilities, to replace such an instrument with agreements able to address the current and future security concerns of all its members. Accordingly, we find merit in the arguments in favour of the need to strengthen and, if necessary, to adapt existing agreements in line with present realities, while remaining engaged in efforts to negotiate and conclude new multilateral international agreements in the field of disarmament.

Accountable compliance and the strict observation of existing obligations are basic prerequisites for a healthy climate conducive to negotiations for new collective security agreements or the adaptation of the existing ones. Universal adherence must remain a constant objective for the multilateral agreements currently in force.

Many distinguished speakers who have recently addressed this sole body for negotiations of multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control have also pointed out the positive developments of last year. Indeed, the decision to extend the scope of the CCW to armed conflicts other than international conflicts and the recent entry into force of the Open Skies Treaty are relevant steps forward, and Romania will continue to be actively engaged in their implementation.

This year Romania will ratify the amendment to article 1 of the CCW, together with Amended Protocol II and Protocol IV to that Convention. It will also pursue an active contribution to the Ottawa Convention process during the period leading up to the first deadlines for full implementation of the article 4 provisions. We are ready to contribute to the Open Skies Treaty, with our long-standing experience gained over a decade of implementing the Romanian-Hungarian bilateral agreement and in many trial flights performed with neighbouring and other countries.

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

We recognize also the important contribution to multilateral security of bilateral agreements aimed at reducing arsenals of offensive nuclear strategic weapons and welcome the recent decision of the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation to engage in talks for deep cuts of existing arsenals. In our view, this is a positive development that outlines, once more, the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States for improving international security and strategic stability.

While pointing out these positive results, allow me also to draw attention to the fact that they have all been achieved outside the Conference on Disarmament.

In the last three years the Conference has not lived up to its main task, and the continuation of the present state of affairs will only further undermine the credibility of this unique multilateral body. And all of this, despite important efforts embodied in a long row of presidential proposals to tackle the divergent items of the programme of work. The sorry result of this sterile, but time and nerve-consuming exercise is that the start of negotiations on FMCT is still wishful thinking years after the adoption of the Shannon mandate and only a few weeks ahead of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

The rapid adoption of the decision on the reappointment of the three special coordinators on procedural issues is an encouraging signal for the Conference, but it does not replace substantive work on the items of the programme of work, which is the main task of this body.

The Romanian position at the Conference on Disarmament has not changed over the last year and the resumption of the negotiations for FMCT remains a priority for our delegation. We are not in favour, as a position of principle, to any linkage between the items of the programme of work.

On the proposals for the programme of work contained in document CD/1624, tabled during the presidency of Ambassador Amorim of Brazil, our position is flexible. Like many other delegations we can endorse them as such.

My delegation stands ready to participate in a debate concerning the issue of transparency in armaments, one of the non-controversial items of the programme of work. We are witnessing a time when the multiplication of internal conflicts and crises provides ground for the emergence and consolidation of non-traditional threats which tend to take shape as a complex combination of terrorism, ethnic cleansing, organized crime and arms trafficking. Past and recent experiences show that the worst affected categories are the civilian population and the international personnel providing humanitarian assistance and engaged in peacekeeping operations.

In view of the current international situation, it is imperative that we resume the debate on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament in order to prepare the ground for future international instruments intended to ensure the restraint and responsibility both of producers and end-users, while providing for equal and undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments.

(Mr. Pascu, Romania)

I would like here to avail myself of this opportunity to appeal to all delegations to increase their participation in the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms, as well as in standardized reporting on military matters and transparency on military expenditures, in line with United Nations General Assembly resolutions 56/14 and 56/24 Q. In our view, the Conference on Disarmament needs to start substantive work immediately on the so-called non-controversial items, while continuing consultations for a consensual solution to the other remaining items.

Mr. President, as we all know, the Conference on Disarmament is a fine-tuned barometer, very sensitive to international security developments and to the political climate that obtains between key actors on the international stage. Romania, like many other members of the Conference on Disarmament, has approached the current annual session with many expectations for real progress in moving this body out of its stalemate that has already endured far too long.

This delegation continues to believe in the future of multilateral international disarmament and the value of the Conference on Disarmament for international peace and security. We are committed to working closely with all delegations to this end.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister of National Defence of Romania for his address and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I should now like to call on the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, to read out the message of the International Women's Day seminar to the Conference.

Mr. ROMÁN-MOREY (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): Before I have the honour to read the message to the Conference on Disarmament presented by the International Women's Day seminar, please allow me, in the name of the secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, to present our warmest congratulations to all women of the world on the occasion of International Women's Day to be celebrated tomorrow, 8 March 2002.

I shall now proceed to read the message.

> "Distinguished Members of the Conference on Disarmament, thank you for giving the annual International Women's Day seminar the opportunity to address you on the occasion of International Women's Day. This day, which actually falls tomorrow, 8 March, has its roots in the centuries-old struggle of women for the right to participate equally with men in making the decisions that determine the economic and social conditions of our societies and concern the question of war or peace. For decades now, women have seen ever more clearly, and particularly those living in regions of conflict, how necessary peace and disarmament are to improving their working and living conditions and the achievement of gender equality. They see disarmament as a necessary means to limit conflict and prevent war, and to free resources to make possible the improvement of economic and social conditions for themselves, their families and their communities.

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

"Both females and males need and have a right to a stable and secure environment; women and their children in particular need resources for the full development of their potential. In turn, the fulfilment of their potential will strengthen security and stability for all, and they will contribute still more to the wealth of nations. In this spirit we wish to say here today the following.

"When we addressed this Conference on 8 March last year, we believed that you would break the stalemate that had beset this negotiating forum for several years. We were confident that the conditions were such that would allow you to proceed with the work plan set out in document CD/1624 of 24 August 2000 - the Amorim proposal. We are deeply disappointed and much concerned that today, one year later, the Conference remains deadlocked. From what we heard and read then and what we hear and read now, there is agreement that document CD/1624 is a good basis for consultations with a view to advancing disarmament talks and negotiations. Why then does the deadlock in this forum persist when there is such an obvious need for talks and genuine negotiations on nuclear disarmament, for preventing an arms race in outer space, and for a treaty on fissile material cut-off, as well as for a comprehensive programme for disarmament? Civil society has a right to an answer from this Conference. Disarmament issues are of concern to all people; not only to Governments and civil servants. The issue of what kind of security is everyone's concern, and to be informed is the people's democratic right.

"Following the terrible events of 11 September in the United States of America, the international community rallied to the United States to join it in its response to the terrorist acts. Taking this collective stand kindled hopes for a return to genuine multilateral disarmament efforts. But the opposite is happening: the response to terrorism is primarily manifested in military terms, resulting in demands for increased military expenditures to develop and produce more and newer arms; the insistence on developing a missile defence system risks setting off a new arms race and undermining a long-standing disarmament treaty. Sophisticated weaponry cannot protect us against these new kinds of terrorist acts. Perhaps a better use and sharing of resources to improve peoples' lives would be a more effective means of eliminating terrorism.

"Addressing the United Nations Symposium on Terrorism and Disarmament in New York last October, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, called for a common strategy in the disarmament area to deal with the global challenge of eradicating terrorism. He pointed out that 'weapons-based security not only perpetuated the wrong value system internationally, it also increased weapon stocks and the danger of their diversion to non-State actors and individual warlords with calamitous consequences. The increasing number and sophistication of weaponry and expensive defence systems would not protect us from terrorism, just as the

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

derogation from fundamental human rights could not be justified by the fight against terrorism. Disarmament and non-proliferation norms contributed to the battle against terrorism. He stressed that short-term expediency should not lead us to compromise on them, because they would eventually feed terrorism as we had seen from the legacy of the cold war'.

"Everything in the world demands that all States, but in particular the Member States of the Conference on Disarmament, work together to prevent the eruption of a new arms race. Our planet cannot bear it. Money-wise, we can hardly afford the safe destruction of the weaponry that has been agreed to be destroyed. Let us not build more.

"We are concerned by the trend to pull out of or dismiss as outdated international treaties, such as the ABM Treaty, or to refuse to ratify treaties negotiated with patience over long periods of time, such as the Comprenensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are deeply disappointed that the lengthy negotiations of a Protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention came to naught.

"We fear that the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to break the deadlock and begin genuine talks and negotiations in accordance with a generally acceptable work plan may have very negative repercussions on the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We fear that the Conference on Disarmament may have become incapable of fulfilling its mandate. What then is the future of disarmament? What is the future of this negotiating forum? We know that there have been periods in the past when the Conference on Disarmament (in its earlier form) was deadlocked. But this does not excuse the lack of movement today when conflicts multiply and arms kill thousands of innocent civilians and whole sectors of populations are massacred, individuals continue to be maimed by landmines still embedded in the soil, and the fear of the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors grows. We understand fully that the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating forum, but we must not forget that it deals in essence with very human and humanitarian issues. Knowing how women live in these many conflicts, we cannot help but be impatient at what seems to us to be a lack of a sense of urgency in coming to grips with disarmament and non-proliferation in the interests of all humanity.

"Having stated this, we agree with, and join the delegates to the Conference who, while deploring the deadlock in this forum, have given recognition to positive developments in arms control and non-proliferation concerning small arms and light weapons, landmines and implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are also encouraged by the commitment of Governments to continued work on strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention and strengthening of the NPT.

"We are gratified that the Conference has decided again to appoint special coordinators on the review of the agenda of the Conference, on the expansion of its membership and on its improved and effective functioning. An agenda set in 1978 may

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

well need some updating. As for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference, we express our hope that the issue of the relationship of non-governmental organizations to the Conference on Disarmament will be seriously taken up during this session. In a letter addressed to the President of the Conference on Disarmament at the start of this session, the President of the Geneva-based NGO Committee for Disarmament expressed the desire of non-governmental organizations to meet the special coordinator to discuss how, in an appropriate way, non-governmental organizations might fruitfully contribute to the deliberations concerning this relationship. We fully support his proposals.

"Distinguished members of the Conference, it is early on in this 2002 session and we maintain our optimism that you will overcome the present stalemate. In this connection we wish to recall the final paragraph of the United Nations Secretary-General's statement to the opening meeting of this year's first session of the Conference on Disarmament: 'The United Nations General Assembly unanimously reaffirmed multilateralism as a core principle in negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Assembly also emphasized the need for progress in multilateral cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation, to contribute to global efforts against terrorism. It is my sincere hope that this Conference will respond to these challenges with dynamism and determination.' We share his hope.

"From this year's international women's seminar, at which we looked at terrorism, the global order, arms and missile defence, we call on you, we urge you to act now, in the common interest of all citizens on this planet. It is time to come to grips with the proliferation of arms and take a decisive step toward disarmament. We wish you strength in your work."

The PRESIDENT: I thank Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, for reading the message of the seminar. I now give the floor to the coordinator of the Group of 21, Ambassador Mora Godoy of Cuba.

Mr. MORA GODOY (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to express our appreciation for the important message from the non-governmental organization community on the occasion of International Women's Day. Our group would like to convey its gratitude and respect to those organizations for the sustained support which they have given to the Conference on Disarmament, as well as to recognize the very valuable contributions that they have traditionally brought to the cause of general and complete disarmament and, therefore to the attainment of international peace and security, as has just been demonstrated in the message read out to us by the Deputy Secretary-General.

The members of the Group of 21 appreciate highly the role played by women in all spheres of life and, particularly, in the international movement for peace. Women, with their special sensitivity, have always been able to rise to the challenges that we face in attaining the

(Mr. Mora Godoy, Cuba)

objectives of international disarmament and world peace. It is therefore an honour today for us to be able to convey our own message of congratulations to all the women of the world and, especially, to those distinguished colleagues who have previously formed and who currently form part of the delegations which participate on a daily basis in our efforts in pursuit of disarmament.

We also extend these congratulations to all women members of those non-governmental organizations which, once again, with their statement have given us encouragement and hope and have urged us to step up our efforts to achieve a world free of all weapons, especially nuclear weapons.

Our most sincere congratulations also go to our female colleagues in the interpretation booths and in the secretariat who are facilitating our own work and communication. We would like to convey to all of them our congratulations and best wishes for their good health, and our hope that through our common endeavours, we may succeed in the not too distant future in turning the world into a place of peace and security for the good of humankind.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the coordinator of the Group of 21 for his statement, and I now give the floor to the coordinator of the Western Group, Ambassador Luck of Australia.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): Mr. President, on behalf of the Western Group, it is my pleasure to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all representatives of non-governmental organizations with us today on International Women's Day. I would like to thank the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on the Status of Women for their coordination of the joint non-governmental organization statement just read out to us by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

We have listened with great interest to the views expressed in the joint statement, and agree that the world faces important security, arms control and disarmament challenges in a rapidly changing strategic environment. Indeed, world expectations for progress at the Conference are high. Now more than ever the Conference needs to act. And yet, we find ourselves continuing to share the disappointment and frustration expressed at the ongoing deadlock in the Conference. We can no longer afford for this to happen - the Conference must start work. Accordingly, the Western Group joins in the statement's call to the Conference to adopt a programme of work immediately. And, to this end, the Western Group stands ready to commence negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty, and also to address other key agenda items.

Finally, on behalf of the Western Group, I would like to pay tribute to the representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations present here today for promoting the cause of disarmament and a culture of peace and understanding. And I would like to reassure all representatives that this is and remains our common goal and our highest priority.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the coordinator of the Western Group for his statement. I now give the floor to Mr. Antonov, representative of the Russian Federation, who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European Group.

Mr. ANTONOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, allow me, on behalf of the Eastern European Group, to thank the representatives of the international non-governmental organizations for their traditional annual statement on the occasion of International Women's Day, which has just been read to us by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Román-Moray. I would also like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Group, our very best wishes to the women representing the non-governmental organizations and also those women who are heads and members of delegations here at the Conference on Disarmament, the director of UNIDIR and her female colleagues, and the women working in the secretariat and as interpreters, on the occasion of tomorrow's holiday. We are grateful to you all for your invaluable support and participation in our work.

The contribution of women to the campaign for general and complete disarmament and international stability is immense. We are grateful to them for their ever greater efforts in this area and we remain convinced that our joint endeavours both within the Conference on Disarmament and beyond its confines will enable us to ensure that the world in which we live is a safer and more tranquil place, for the benefit of all humankind.

On behalf of the member delegations of the Eastern European Group and of its observers, I wish our dear women colleagues the very best of health, happiness and well-being. I wish you every success in the difficult task that we face together.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Tomorrow is International Women's Day. Please allow me, at the outset, to extend the congratulations and best wishes of the Chinese delegation to all women colleagues present among us, to the representatives of women's organizations and to women staff-members of the secretariat. I have just listened attentively to the message from the women's organizations and would like to express my appreciation for their concern for the cause of disarmament and the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the World Conference on International Women's Year, held in Mexico in 1975, all Governments were urged "to provide women with equal opportunities with men to represent their countries in all international forums where the issues of international peace and cooperation are discussed and in particular in the meetings of the organizations of the United Nations and all conferences on disarmament and international peace and other regional bodies". It is gratifying to note that certain steps have already been taken towards that goal. Please permit me on this occasion to pay special tribute to all women diplomats present here. The participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament by an ever greater number of women is evidence of the longing for peace and growing concern about the Conference on the part of the international community, including women. Many thanks to you all!

(Mr. Hu, China)

Women not only embody such properties as tenderness, kindness and beauty, they also represent the great quality of maternal love that embraces the entire human race. For a variety of reasons women, more often than not, are the most vulnerable group in society and the direct victims of wars and armed conflicts. Today, women in many parts of the world are being subjected to untold suffering precisely because of war and are therefore all the more anxious for the international community to maintain world peace and security through its multilateral efforts. As one route for the attainment of this cherished ideal is through the pursuit of disarmament, it is only natural that women from all countries should be extensively concerned about and involved in disarmament efforts. The 1975 Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace urged that women as well as men should promote real, general and complete disarmament under effective international control, starting with the nuclear disarmament. It is heartening to note that, over the ensuing 20 years and more, the international community has responded to that appeal by setting in place a relatively comprehensive legal system governing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and fashioned this into an important safeguard guaranteeing international and regional peace and stability. It is essential now that this legal system be maintained, consolidated, strengthened and further developed and not weakened or damaged in any way.

In 1995, in the Beijing Declaration adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, women from all over the world expressed their determination to work actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control and to support negotiations and the conclusion, without delay, of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable, comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which contributed to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. Thanks to the strenuous efforts of all member States, that treaty has now been concluded and is open for signature. Today, however, we cannot but be worried that such a hard-won treaty has been rejected and its future looks gloomy. The goal of the complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons, the cherished hope of women the world over, is still far from being attained. The negative development to which I alluded earlier epitomizes the severe problems faced by the process of the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and also bears witness to the abiding unstable and insecure state of our planet. We call upon the entire membership of the Conference on Disarmament to jettison the cold war mentality and to strengthen dialogue and cooperation, in the interest of promoting universal security and accomplishing development for all.

As we look forward to the festivity shared by the women of the world, may I reaffirm the readiness of the Chinese delegation to join all women in their untiring efforts to promote disarmament and to safeguard peace.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

Distinguished colleagues, I would now like to proceed to the appointment of the officers to fill the posts of special coordinators established in decision CD/1667 taken by the Conference at its 893rd plenary meeting on 14 February 2002.

(The President)

It is my pleasure to inform the Conference that all groups have now nominated their candidates to assume these posts and, therefore, the Conference is now ready to appoint, for the duration of its 2002 session, the following officers: Ambassador Eui-Yong Chung of the Republic of Korea as special coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference; Ambassador Dimiter Tzantchev of Bulgaria as special coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference; and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka as special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference.

In this connection, I should like to emphasize that this agreement has been reached on the understanding that the proposed distribution of posts is applicable only to the 2002 session of the Conference and that, in the future, the principle of rotation of the posts of special coordinators as well as of all other tasks and responsibilities in the Conference shall be respected in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

With this understanding, may I take it that the Conference agrees to these appointments?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to extend our sincere congratulations to Ambassador Chung, Ambassador Tzantchev and Ambassador Kariyawasam on their appointment and to wish them every success in discharging their important responsibilities. At the same time, I would like to urge the newly appointed special coordinators to embark on their tasks as early as possible, so that they can report on their findings before the conclusion of the 2002 session, as provided for in decision CD/1667.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

Distinguished colleagues, since the third week of my presidency is coming to an end, I would like to present to you a brief report on the consultations that I have undertaken during that period.

My immediate task, as the President was to build upon the achievements of my predecessor, Mr. Tawfik of Egypt, who forged consensus on the re-establishment of the posts of three special coordinators on the review of the agenda of the Conference, on the expansion of its membership and on its improved and effective functioning.

Accordingly, I started my tenure with consultations, involving all the regional coordinators and China, on the nomination of candidates for these posts. As usual in such cases, the main assumption on which I based my consultations was the need for ensuring that a balanced geographical representation among the office-holders was maintained. Other requirements in this regard, some of which had also been raised earlier at the plenary meetings, were reiterated by the coordinators during my consultations. On the one hand, there were views that the distribution of these posts should be subject to rotation among various groups, as had been the case in the past when nominations rotated among the various groups, usually every session. On the other hand, views were expressed that, to the extent possible, the special

(The President)

coordinators nominated last year should be allowed to continue their work since in 2001 they were nominated towards the end of the session and, therefore, were not able to conclude their mandated assignments.

Today, thanks to your spirit of accommodation and cooperation, these consultations have been concluded successfully and the three newly appointed special coordinators are ready, as decided now, to proceed to the implementation of their respective mandates.

From the very beginning, I have also undertaken parallel consultations with the regional coordinators and China on possible ways and means of facilitating consensus on the programme of work of the Conference. It goes without saying that I have based these consultations on the work done by my predecessors. Thus far, I have not detected any considerable changes in the positions of the various groups that would allow us to focus on elaborating specific proposals for making progress. The general findings of my predecessors have not changed; there is still an understanding among the various groups that the proposal on the programme of work contained in document CD/1624 is regarded as a basis for further consultations. On the other hand, at the plenary meetings held during this session, we have witnessed some encouraging developments in the national positions of a number of member States. You will recall that some member States have expressed their readiness to adopt the proposed programme of work in its present form. In addition, we have heard the reconfirmation of previous statements which clearly indicate that the subsidiary bodies envisaged in document CD/1624 for various agenda items are now, in principle, acceptable to all. It is my duty, however, to emphasize at the same time that there are still substantial differences of views with regard to the mandates of the subsidiary bodies on nuclear disarmament and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. With your kind cooperation, I am willing to use the remaining time of my presidency to explore further this aspect of the programme of work.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize once again the need for the continuation of the business-like dialogue among the members of the Conference at the plenary meetings. The 2002 session has been marked, so far, by the renewed interest of member States to use this mechanism - in fact one of the many such mechanisms available to us at this stage - to advance the work of the Conference.

I sincerely hope that this trend continues.

Before we adjourn the meeting, I should like to request a meeting with the group coordinators after the adjournment of this meeting, in room I, our usual room.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 14 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.897
14 March 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 March 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Fisseha Yimer (Ethiopia)

GE.02-61017 (E) 050402 110402

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 897th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I would like to extend, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Alfredo Pinoargote Cevallos, and to assure him of our cooperation and support in his new assignment.

I have no speakers on my list for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

Distinguished colleagues, distinguished delegates, you will recall that, on Thursday, 7 March 2002, I informed you, through your respective coordinators, that I had received a letter dated 6 March 2002 from Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, addressed to me, in my capacity as President of the Conference. In this letter Mr. Dhanapala informed me about the intention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, to be the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and to act as his personal representative to the Conference. Mr. Dhanapala also requested me to consult the Conference and to seek its concurrence on this appointment, pursuant to the request contained in rule 13 of the Conference's rules of procedure.

On the basis of my consultations with the coordinators of the regional groups as well as with China, I am now in a position to inform you that, in general, all the members of the groups and China have concurred with the Secretary-General's appointment of Mr. Ordzhonikidze as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as his personal representative to the Conference. In this connection, I should also note that the respective statements of the groups on the issue have been nuanced and have also been supplemented with the differently accented references to the relevant rules of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament which provide guidance on the nomination of the Secretary-General of the Conference.

Accordingly, and with your concurrence, I intend to reply to the letter of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, to inform him about the outcome of my consultations and, of course, the decision of this Conference.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage on this issue? I see none.

Accordingly, I shall write to Mr. Dhanapala, informing him of the Conference's concurrence with the Secretary-General's appointment of the new Secretary-General of the Conference.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Distinguished colleagues, since the term of my presidency is coming to an end, I would like to make some concluding remarks that complement my report on consultations with coordinators of the groups and with China on various aspects of our work.

(The President)

As you are aware, my first and foremost task after the assumption of the presidency of the Conference was to follow up the agreement reached by my predecessor in the office, Mr.Tawfik of Egypt, on the re-appointment of three special coordinators on the review of the agenda of the Conference, on the expansion of membership, and on its improved and effective functioning.

Accordingly, I proceeded immediately to consultations involving all the regional coordinators and China on the nomination of candidates for these posts. Thanks to the commendable cooperation of all the parties involved, as well as all of you, these consultations have been concluded successfully and the three newly appointed special coordinators have now the necessary time at their disposal for the effective conclusion of their work and to report to the Conference before the end of its 2002 session. This has been an important decision, since it provides the Conference with an opportunity for self-reflection and a thorough review of its working methods. As such, it may contribute significantly to the invigorating of a working dialogue and to the building of a solid basis for the commencement of the substantive work and for the negotiation of disarmament treaties, which is the main task of the Conference.

Although the appointment of the special coordinators at this early stage of the session is encouraging, it should not distract our attention from further efforts aimed at focusing the activities of the Conference on substantive work, which in the end is the raison d'être of the Conference on Disarmament. The stalemate in the Conference, which is of concern to us all, reflects the current situation in the field of disarmament and arms limitation. And as this stalemate is becoming protracted, it is ever more imperative for the members of the Conference to demonstrate good will and flexibility in order to find a compromise and finally get back to business.

That is why, from the very beginning of my presidency, I have also undertaken parallel consultations with the regional coordinators and China aimed at facilitating consensus on the programme of work of the Conference. Regrettably, I cannot report to you any considerable developments in the positions of the groups that would bring us closer to an agreement on the programme of work. At this stage, the draft programme of work, as contained in document CD/1624, which was proposed by Ambassador Amorim of Brazil, remains the best option available and is still widely supported as a basis for further consultations. Among positive developments, I would like to emphasize that some delegations expressed their readiness to accept the proposed programme of work in its present form. Moreover, there seems to be an agreement, in principle, on subsidiary bodies for the various agenda items, as proposed in document CD/1624. At the same time, however, we still observe a persistent basic divergence of views on the mandates of the proposed subsidiary bodies on nuclear disarmament and on prevention of an arms race in outer space.

I am greatly encouraged by the commendable invigoration of our plenary meetings, and the open and constructive exchange of views and opinions that have been taking place in our forum during my presidency.

(The President)

During our weekly meetings, many delegations have stressed that the current volatile security environment provides us both with challenges and with opportunities to engage in substantive work. We have heard appeals to intensify our efforts and to break the impasse that has affected the Conference for too long a time.

Time is passing quickly. We should not assume that the window of opportunity which we have today will last forever. We should therefore carefully examine all innovative suggestions that could contribute to agreement on the programme of work of the Conference. It is my sincere hope that we will continue our search for a compromise solution that will allow us to start the substantive work of the Conference and that we will continue to do it with determination and imagination, guided by the spirit of collective responsibility for international peace and security.

During my presidency I have also conducted consultations pursuant to the letter dated 6 March 2002 from Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, addressed to me in my capacity as President of the Conference. As you will recall, Mr. Dhanapala informed me in his letter of the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, to be the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and to act as his Personal Representative. Mr. Dhanapala also requested me to consult the Conference and to seek its concurrence on this appointment, pursuant to rule 13 of our rules of procedure. Earlier in this meeting, I reported to the Conference on the outcome of my consultations, namely that the members of the groups and China had concurred with the Secretary-General's appointment.

In conclusion, let me encourage all of you, distinguished delegates, to take advantage of the political capacity of the Conference, which is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. I would like to emphasize that it is essential to maintain and to preserve the negotiating capacity of the Conference so that it can embark on substantive work as soon as an agreement on the programme of work is reached. To this end, an active and thorough exchange of views on the relevant issues on our agenda during plenary meetings is an absolutely indispensable mechanism. It has to be emphasized, as an encouraging factor, that the 2002 session of the Conference on Disarmament has been marked by the renewed interest of member States to make full use of this mechanism, perhaps the most important of many mechanisms available to us at this stage to carry forward the work of the Conference. I sincerely hope that this trend continues and that the members of the Conference will put forward their views on how we can make further progress in our endeavours. As one saying goes: "It is always darkest before the dawn". Let us hope that in the middle of our difficulties lies an opportunity for the Conference to reaffirm its role as the world's only multilateral negotiating disarmament forum capable of producing tangible results for the benefit of all humankind.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the incoming President, Ambassador Markku Reimaa of Finland, to continue the highly demanding task of consultations on the programme of work with his well-known diplomatic skills and perseverance. I wish him good luck and success in those endeavours. I would also take this opportunity to thank my

(The President)

predecessor, Mr. Mohamed Tawfik of Egypt, for his efforts during his tenure as President of the Conference. I would also like to thank all colleagues and friends for their valuable assistance and support during my presidency.

Allow me also to extend my words of appreciation to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, for his valuable guidance, as well as to Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and to other members of the secretariat for their assistance during my presidency.

Last but not least, I would like to express my thanks to the interpreters and the conference room officers who have facilitated our meetings.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to bring to your attention the organization of our work for the next week. Since the secretariat has received requests from delegations to schedule plenary meetings for both Tuesday and Thursday, we shall proceed accordingly. At the plenary meeting on Tuesday, 19 March 2002, the Conference will be addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, the Hon. Mr. Bill Graham, and at the plenary meeting on Thursday, 21 March 2002, the Conference will hear addresses by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Mr. Tokaev and by the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Satuli.

That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 19 March 2002, at 10 a.m. in this conference room.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.898
19 March 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 19 March 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Markku Reimaa (Finland)

GE.02-61031 (E) 040402 190402

The PRESIDENT: I have the honour to open the 898th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a great honour for me to have this opportunity and to assume the functions of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. For Finland, this is the first time. I can assure you that we recognize our responsibility. In this room, there are only responsible chairs. I can assure you that we shall try to do our best to serve the common cause and to build on the very encouraging achievements reached by my predecessors, particularly by my colleagues from Egypt and Ethiopia.

It is my very great pleasure to welcome most warmly His Excellency Mr. Bill Graham, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, to address this plenary. I am sure that his statement will be followed with great interest, taking into account the very clear commitment of Canada to this forum and the contributions made in the past by our Canadian colleagues to efforts to bring our deliberations forward.

Mr. GRAHAM (Canada): Mr. President, perhaps I could personally congratulate you on your election as President for this session. I have just been selected as Minister for Foreign Affairs and you have just been elected President, so you and I should get along fine.

Colleagues, three weeks ago, the keepers of the "Doomsday Clock" advanced its hands nearer to the midnight hour, symbolizing the possibility of a nuclear weapons conflict - its closest since the end of the cold war, citing worries over lagging disarmament efforts, the security of existing stockpiles and terrorism.

The directors of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, a magazine that has campaigned for nuclear disarmament since 1947, pushed the hands forward by two minutes, to seven minutes to midnight.

Seven minutes to midnight. After what the world has been through with 11 September, one would think that our minds would finally be concentrated and that we would see - more clearly than ever - the need for an international security system within which all people and countries might feel secure.

As the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists reminds us, however, we are still a long way from realizing the goals of nuclear disarmament and, indeed, a long way from making the world free from weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President, it is an honour for me to join you here at the Conference on Disarmament today. I have only held my portfolio for two months, but as a parliamentarian and the Chair of the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs for seven years, I have followed in detail and for some time the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agenda, and the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Graham, Canada)

In 1998 our committee tabled in Parliament its report entitled "Canada and the nuclear challenge: Reducing the political value of nuclear weapons for the twenty-first century". Since then we have worked in concert with the Middle Powers Initiative and other Canadian and international non-governmental organizations on issues related to disarmament and nuclear proliferation.

It is for this reason that I would like to speak candidly about this forum and, more importantly, about the responsibilities we share in moving forward the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agenda.

The Conference on Disarmament is, as we all know, our unique, permanent multilateral forum for negotiating non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament instruments. It is therefore a forum which does not exist merely for the sake of debate. Its mandate is clear: to negotiate treaties that will be global in reach; that will be verifiable; and that will contribute in real ways to security. The track record of the Conference on Disarmament is quite impressive: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Conference's predecessor produced the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Perhaps this is all we can expect in the lifetime of any multilateral forum. Maybe. But I think we should expect more. Expecting more of the Conference on Disarmament, we must demand more of ourselves.

Today, unfortunately, not only is the Conference on Disarmament unable to agree on a programme of work to expand the corpus of international law in the field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, but the existing system of treaties, representing the acquired gains of decades, is threatened from within and without.

In our view the present situation is one of grave concern.

The conclusion of treaties is not an end in itself. Treaties are rightly known as instruments - tools for achieving an objective - in this case the consolidation of international peace and security. It may sound trite and may sound somewhat old-fashioned, but Canada continues to be of the firm view that multilateral, legally binding treaties are indispensable tools in building common security.

Who can contend that absolute prohibitions on chemical and biological weapons do not enhance global security? Who can pretend that the ban on testing nuclear weapons does not lessen the risk of their use? Who can claim that the covenant enshrined in the NPT has not impeded the spread of nuclear weapons while guiding us on the road to their total elimination? Who can deny that we have developed a resilient global system, with clearly identified parameters and standards of behaviour as a result of our common efforts over the decades? Equally, however, who would suggest that we should not do more to ensure that commitments are fully implemented, to assure ourselves that States are acting in word and in deed in full compliance with their legal undertakings, and to ensure that the international community can be fully satisfied that countries are not pursuing weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes?

(Mr. Graham, Canada)

It may be that treaties - mere paper - cannot constrain States bend on acquiring weapons of mass destruction, much less terrorists who know no such constraints. But we would never suggest that, in dealing with the crucial issues of national and international security, there is only one solution to every situation. Our shared security system is, in fact, the sum of many parts.

That is why we also need robust national defence forces along with military and political alliances, national export controls and international export control arrangements, national intelligence agencies and multilateral monitoring, voluntary arms reductions and transparency measures, and verification protocols and cooperative weapons destruction programmes. These are all necessary elements in building security and promoting peace.

If we are to be frank with one another, we must also admit that it is no secret that some countries seek to hide behind the cover of multilateral processes and use the language of fairness and non-discrimination as a cover for their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. These countries devalue the multilateral system. Those of us that truly care about our institutions and the legal regime that underpins them must be vigilant and speak clearly when we see such abuses and work together - through and with the instruments we have so carefully constructed in the multilateral system - to take common action.

Our societies are based upon the rule of law, and the sustainable, shared global future that we seek must have the same basis, however difficult it may be to obtain universal acceptance of the rules and establish effective means of enforcement. Examples close to home illustrate the point: we do not dispense with domestic law because we know some will defy the law; nor do homeowners consider stronger locks an adequate substitute for the law. Security is complex and elusive, but we need both protection and the law for real protection.

The only real option - embracing the rule of law, whether as individuals in society or as States in the international community - means accepting agreed parameters for our approaches. This could include foreclosing some options. But this in its own way opens other options - collective options - which have the power of international legitimacy. Embracing the rule of law means that the law must apply to all, equally. This basic principle is of fundamental importance. Indeed, the more complex the world becomes, the more clearly this principle resonates.

Yet compared with national societies, global polity - as I need hardly remind the people in this room - is in its infancy. Multilateral norms set standards of conduct but are often unaccompanied by any means of assuring that these standards are met. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention was the first treaty to ban an entire class of weapon, but 30 years after its conclusion its norm is in jeopardy because of the imperfect compliance of some States parties, and equally because of our failure to agree upon an even modest mechanism to monitor and encourage compliance. By contrast, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency can provide rigorous verification regimes for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Non-Proliferation Treaty respectively, but they

(Mr. Graham, Canada)

too lack the resources necessary to carry out their tasks, as well as the cooperation of some member States. Surely at this crucial moment when collective movement forward seems to be so difficult, we can at least rally behind our institutions and ensure their continued effective functioning. This is in all our interests.

Even in cases where States have clearly violated their basic legal obligations under treaty regimes, we lack an agreed and workable means of enforcing compliance. We have yet to devise an acceptable response to those who flout international law in the sphere of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. We all agree that the risk of inaction, of looking away while countries pursue weapons of mass destruction, is unacceptable and cannot be countenanced. But even if we recognize that coercion may in rare cases be necessary to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure their elimination, we must require that such coercion be firmly grounded in a rules-based multilateral system. Otherwise we condemn ourselves to live in a world governed solely by power, a solution that may suit our purposes today but as history has demonstrated, may not be relied upon forever.

Multilateral negotiations, on the other hand, are often painfully slow and untidy, but our frustration and justifiable impatience with these processes should lead us to reinvigorate them, to reform them, to consider alternatives, but not, I suggest, to walk away.

As partisans of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, we must assure ourselves that we not only respect our treaty obligations but are seen to do so, that our policies and practices are consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of our international undertakings.

The NPT, nearly universal as a legal instrument and, indeed, universal as a norm, is at the core of non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. Its regime is not confined to the bare bones of the Treaty but incorporates the fuller understandings of the Treaty's purport achieved through the strengthened review process. But have we all concluded additional protocols with the International Atomic Energy Agency? And how can we explain the faltering progress toward implementation of the 13 practical steps toward the fulfilment of article VI, agreed to at the last Review Conference? At the beginning of the new review cycle next month, Canada will press for these and related concerns in applying the Treaty's hard-won systems of accountability.

Prominent among the 13 steps is a call for the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a fissile material treaty. Despite an agreed negotiating mandate, itself the product of years of work, the Governments represented here are unwilling to agree on a formula to resume negotiations for such a treaty. It is really troubling that such an instrument, which would simultaneously advance both disarmament and non-proliferation goals, remains within reach but seemingly is unattainable.

At the same time, there is general support for work in the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and on aspects of nuclear disarmament outside the purview of a ban on fissile materials. Yet again, member States cannot agree even to begin such

(Mr. Graham, Canada)

work. It is distressing to note that, despite the best efforts of so many individuals in this forum, the Conference on Disarmament is still unable to agree on a work programme that would allow it to get back to business on all three items. Canada appeals to all member States to demonstrate the flexibility needed to overcome the Conference's impasse in these three areas of such importance to our future collective security.

What alternatives are available if the Conference on Disarmament cannot deliver? Although we would prefer the Conference to be truly representative by allowing participation by all interested States, Canada nonetheless regards this forum as the first choice for any multilateral negotiation for a non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament instrument. The first choice, but not the only choice.

Ad hoc parallel processes have been shown to yield real results. They have given us the Ottawa Convention against anti-personnel mines, and promised to produce an international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. The existing Outer Space Treaty bans weapons of mass destruction from space. In the absence of work in the Conference on Disarmament, would a protocol to the Outer Space Treaty be an appropriate vehicle to prevent the weaponization of outer space?

Humanity demands that the menace of weapons of mass destruction be eradicated; that the prohibitions on biological and chemical weapons be perfected; that States cheating be caught, exposed and compelled to comply; that legitimate industry and dual-use trade flourish without feeding weapons programmes; that nuclear weapons be progressively devalued, marginalized and eliminated; and that the heavens remain forever a sanctuary free from weapons of any description and not become a place of threat or potential mass destruction.

We have the science and, I suggest, skill to realize these ambitions. Because, however, of the mistrust that we have for one another, we lack the spirit to generate the political will. Treaty regimes are long-term investments in security, enhancing security by preventing threats before they can arise. The world is too complex and too dangerous a place to rely simply on responding to threats from those who would seek to use the most heinous weapons systems in order to wreak terror or advance their ambitions. We need to be far more proactive. We must not passively await threats from weapons of mass destruction, but deal with weapons-of-mass-destruction aspirations and programmes at their very genesis. This means that we need to build a security system that will enable us to set standards, work together to meet those standards, measure behaviour, redress concerns and penalize those who violate our commonly agreed codes. And it implies a continuum of commitment, resources and political will - something we all talk about but fail to act on.

In closing, Mr. President, I would be remiss if I were not to repeat Canada's non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament priorities.

(Mr. Graham, Canada)

We seek the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. To that end we will work to achieve the full implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In that context, we want early entry into force of the CTBT and, in the interim, the most effective organization that we can devise to support the treaty regime. The political value of nuclear weapons must be devalued, particularly as their purpose is primarily political. The negative security assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States party to the NPT are a vital element in international security and must be preserved and respected. We seek a robust and effective Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and International Atomic Energy Agency, and a compliance regime for the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention.

We advocate effective global and regional action on the use of small arms and light weapons and other conventional weapons, and universal adherence to the anti-personnel mine ban convention. This body should be freed to take up the Amorim proposal and deliver to the world, urgently, a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for weapons purposes and to work on nuclear disarmament and the non-weaponization of outer space.

These goals, which we cannot shirk, require the underpinning of legally-binding instruments. Law can be enforced if it is to be effective, but it cannot be imposed. And international norms must be nurtured, validated and promulgated so that they become the new standards for international behaviour. These can be developed only through painstaking, multilateral negotiation, whether in the Conference on Disarmament or elsewhere. It is our earnest hope in Canada that the Conference on Disarmament will play its rightful part in this important process. I can assure you that Canada will be working in the spirit of commitment to common values and common action to build real security and that I will do my best, as my country's Foreign Minister, to ensure that Canada's policies and actions are dedicated to these goals so important to humanity.

Let us all work together to reverse the decision of the directors of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists and push back the hands of the "Doomsday Clock", so that we may all breathe more securely and work together for our common development, not our assured destruction.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Hon. Mr. Graham, Minister for Foreign Affairs, for his very important statement.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I just ask you to remain in the hall. I shall now suspend the meeting for a couple of minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 10.40 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: Dear colleagues, we now continue the plenary.

We have one more speaker on the list of speakers. I give the floor to Mr. Murat Esenli, the representative of Turkey.

Mr. ESENLI (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation has the privilege of speaking following the appointment of Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze as Secretary-General of the Conference, as well as under your presidency, I would like to extend our congratulations to you both and to assure you of the Turkish delegation's full support in the discharge of your functions and in the pursuit of what we still hope will be a productive and forward-looking session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Taking advantage of the opportunity afforded us by the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, the Hon. William Graham, distinguished representative of the country which has spearheaded the global anti-personnel landmine movement, I wish to read out the press statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on my Government's indefinite unilateral extension of the comprehensive moratorium on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. I quote:

> "In view of the human sufferings and casualties by anti-personnel landmines, the international community has long been endeavouring to take effective measures in order to prevent their use. The resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly calling on Member States to implement a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines have constituted an important part of these efforts since 1993. In the light of these resolutions, Turkey unilaterally declared on 17 January 1996 a comprehensive moratorium on all anti-personnel landmine exports and transfers for a renewable term of three years.
>
> "Moratoriums on the export of anti-personnel landmines were superseded on 1 March 1999 by the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention, which provides for the total prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of the said mines as well as their destruction. The security situation around Turkey precluded it from signing the Ottawa Convention at the time of its conclusion. Nevertheless, as an expression of its commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, Turkey extended its national moratorium on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines on 17 January 1999 for another three years. Turkey also concluded agreements with Bulgaria in March 1999 and with Georgia in January 2001, with a view to establishing regimes for keeping the common borders free from these mines.
>
> "After careful consideration, Turkey has now decided to accede to the Ottawa Convention. Moreover, Turkey and Greece have agreed to start concurrently the procedures that will make both countries parties to the Ottawa Convention. Turkey has come to the stage of submitting the Convention to the Turkish Grand National Assembly for finalization of the accession procedures.
>
> "In the meantime, Turkey's national moratorium on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines expired in January 2002. Turkey has decided to extend once again her moratorium on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines, this time indefinitely, as an expression of her sincere commitment to becoming party to the Ottawa Convention."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement. Any further interventions in this plenary?

If there are no further requests to speak in this plenary, I would like to give some indication of how we intend to allocate our time during the Finnish presidency, which, as you see, will be divided into two main parts: this week and next week, before the break, and then the last two weeks, starting on 13 May.

We have started bilateral consultations, we held group coordinator consultations yesterday, and we have started to elaborate how to utilize this time in the best possible way. I shall continue bilateral consultations parallel to that and try to build upon the achievements, as mentioned, of previous Presidents. CD/1624 remains the best basis and reference for our consultations.

It is my intention to try to prepare for you, very informally and in very close coordination with all of you, some additional practical elements to be considered during the break and, when we return on 13 May, I hope that we might see some chances to utilize the Conference's potential more efficiently.

As to the practical timetable before us, I should like to inform you that the next plenary meeting will be held this coming Thursday, 21 March, at 10 a.m. in this very room, and we already have on the list of speakers the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Mr. Tokaev, and the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr. Satuli.

Furthermore, we will have one plenary next week, on Thursday, 28 March, and, as I understand, we are expecting one more foreign minister, at least, to address the plenary on that day.

If there are no more comments or requests for the floor today, it is my intention to close this plenary. The next plenary will take place here on Thursday, 21 March 2002, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.899
21 March 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 21 March 2002, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Markku Reimaa (Finland)

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The PRESIDENT: Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, the podium for our plenary today is somewhat unusual. But before I proceed, I declare open the 899th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First, I would like to inform you that the secretariat has received - and I have received - from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations the following message, dated 19 March 2002: "Following consultations with the Conference on Disarmament, the Secretary-General has announced the appointment of Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, with immediate effect, as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. In that capacity, Mr. Ordzhonikidze will also act as the Secretary-General's Personal Representative to the Conference."

I would most warmly welcome in our midst the just appointed Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, and congratulate him on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf on his appointment to this important post. I would like to assure him of our cooperation and support, and I am sure that the Conference will benefit immensely from his vast experience and his diplomatic skills. I believe that the introduction of fresh forces at this juncture is most welcome, and I hope that this appointment augurs well for our future deliberations.

Furthermore, as you see, the Conference will be addressed today by two distinguished speakers, and I welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. K. Tokaev, and it is my personal pleasure to welcome the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Antti Satuli. Please accept that, for this meeting at least, Finland is wearing two hats on the podium. This does not happen every week in the Conference.

The presence of our two distinguished guests with us today demonstrates the enduring commitment of their Governments to our common endeavours and, I believe, to the continued importance which they attach to the Conference.

Before giving them the floor, I should like to extend words of welcome to Ambassador Naéla Gabr of Egypt, Ambassador András Szabó of Hungary and Ambassador Ivan Mora Godoy of Cuba, who have assumed responsibilities as the representatives of their respective Governments in this Conference. We are looking forward to working with them in pursuing our common goals.

I have the pleasure to give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Mr. Tokaev.

Mr. TOKAEV (Kazakhstan): First of all, I would like to extend my congratulations to Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze on his appointment to this high post and to wish him every success in his difficult endeavours.

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

It is also a great honour for me to address this representative forum and to present the position of Kazakhstan on arms control and disarmament issues. But before that, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on your appointment to this post and to wish you every success.

I will not go into the details of my country's input in the disarmament sphere, since this is something of which you are all well aware. The decision of your forum to accept Kazakhstan as a full member of the Conference on Disarmament is clear evidence of this contribution. President Nursultan Nazarbaev, speaking to the participants of the international conference entitled "The Twenty-first Century: Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", held in Kazakhstan in August 2001, pointed out that NPT remains the only international agreement committing its members to undertake all measures in the nuclear disarmament area. The promotion of NPT provisions should remain a priority subject for discussions within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Indeed, arms control, disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction are issues of extreme importance for Kazakhstan.

The events which occurred on 11 September 2001 have shown the vulnerability of global security. Among the most important elements of global strategy in the fight against terrorism are our efforts aimed at preventing terrorist organizations or non-State players from possessing weapons of mass destruction. These efforts are to be strengthened. We are strongly convinced that the international nature of contemporary threats and challenges requires multilateral efforts for their prevention.

The effect of globalization on the flows of finance and the economies of different countries and expanding access to scientific and technical information and technologies have created the possibility of virtually boundless movements by people. This process has had a strong impact on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The development of missile technologies and the proliferation of conventional weapons facilitate the escalation of regional conflicts, destroying global stability.

There is therefore a great necessity for a new political vision to combat new threats in the new century. We must understand that there are no alternatives to the spirit of good will and cooperation. New threats must face new, more efficient forms of action by the world community.

It is impossible to achieve security without maintaining, enforcing and universalizing the existing regimes on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I believe that all the distinguished representatives present here will agree that international agreements require further adaptation to existing political realities. Further efforts must be carried out to universalize, develop and strengthen verification mechanisms.

The results of the NPT Review Conference in 2000 gave hope for further promotion of the nuclear non-proliferation process and the reduction of existing nuclear arsenals. 2001 was a

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

significant year in this regard: the inspection regime in the framework of the INF Treaty has been completed and a seven-year period of strategic offensive weapons reduction by the two largest nuclear States - Russia and the United States of America - has come to an end. The implementation of these agreements has shown that these goals can be achieved only in an atmosphere of cooperation, trust and mutual understanding. At the same time, reaching concurrence in the positions of different States and looking for compromises to honour appropriate commitments are possible only within legally binding agreements.

Meanwhile, in 2001, certain events took place which called into question the possibility of strengthening the global regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Up to now, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty - which, incidentally, is the most recent achievement of the Conference on Disarmament - has still not entered into force. We regret that those countries whose ratification of the Treaty is still required have not so far taken the appropriate legal action.

The situation related to the verification mechanism of the Biological Weapons Convention is a matter of concern for us, since this type of weapon is of great interest to terrorists. I hope that the BWC Review Conference will be able to accomplish its work in November and adopt a decision on the verification mechanism protocol.

Fortunately, the situation with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction seems better. Inspections are being conducted, documents are being presented, and existing stocks are being destroyed.

My country appreciates the role of the ABM Treaty in maintaining stability and security. We believe that, even after the United States withdrawal from the Treaty, which has led to a drastic change of its substance, some provisions of this treaty can be practically implemented in the future.

We also must understand that science is constantly developing, and its achievements cannot be confined to one national territory. The proliferation of missiles and missile technologies evidently confirms this tendency. From our point of view the appropriate activities in this direction must be pursued within the multilateral framework, with the aim of setting up a global regime for the non-proliferation of missiles and missile technologies. Proposals to create an international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation, as well as to create a global missile and missile technology control system, might become agenda items for serious discussions at the global level.

I must also draw your attention to the problem of the stockpiling of conventional weapons, which is a matter of great concern. This threatens security and stability in a number of regions of the world, including Central Asia, taking into account the present situation in Afghanistan. We appreciate the United Nations paying special attention to this issue. A result of

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

its long-term activity in this direction, the programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects was adopted in 2001, and Kazakhstan is ready to make every effort to ensure its implementation.

Regional security and stability are vitally important for global peace and development. In our region, in the past few years, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia has been gaining momentum. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization also looks to be an extremely promising initiative. Strengthening stability and security is at the top of the agenda of these forums.

In order to reduce armaments practically and continue the disarmament process, it is not enough to create new strategic relations between two nuclear Powers. The Conference on Disarmament, as the symbol of multilateral efforts, must articulate its firm position. Otherwise, we will find ourselves left outside the disarmament process.

As we understand, the basis of future activity of the Conference on Disarmament could be the proposals being discussed over the past two years. The member States have to exert their political will and begin focused discussions on the priorities defined in this document, to which, in principle, we all agree. In our opinion, it is necessary to commence work in parallel, conducting negotiations on some issues and beginning discussions on the possibility of pursuing negotiations on other issues. Otherwise, the Conference on Disarmament will lose its credibility and, afterwards, we will have to seek other ways of solving the relevant problems.

We are convinced of the need to use existing opportunities and not to waste time searching and creating new ones. The agreements reached during the NPT Conference in 2000 must be implemented, ensuring progress in the nuclear disarmament process.

Speaking specifically about the Conference on Disarmament, we would like to refer to the following points: first, in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, it is necessary to begin negotiations on the FMCT, which will become an important contribution to non-proliferation and will complement the work of IAEA and CTBTO; and, second, it is necessary to start negotiations on preventing the arms race in outer space: it is vitally important to prevent the militarization of space, which could lead to unpredictable consequences.

Kazakhstan is firmly convinced that the Conference on Disarmament can and must prove its efficiency. We are ready for intensive and constructive interaction and hope that all members of the Conference will exercise flexibility and political will in order to ensure real progress in our common endeavours.

The PRESIDENT: I thank His Excellency Mr. Tokaev for his intervention, and I now give the floor to the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Antti Satuli.

Mr. SATULI (Finland): Mr. President, I am indeed grateful for this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to start by associating myself with the

(Mr. Satuli, Finland)

wishes and congratulations that have already been expressed to Mr. Ordzhonikidze, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, who is now also occupying the post of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in this Conference.

Likewise, I would like to extend my congratulations to my colleague and friend, Ambassador Markku Reimaa, on his appointment as President of the Conference on Disarmament. Finland is taking over the presidency of this Conference for the first time at a very challenging moment. Today, more than ever, disarmament and non-proliferation should be our common endeavour.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September in the United States have changed the world in many ways. The impact of the acts of terror continues to be assessed but many analyses show that we are living in a different environment, an environment which is more insecure than it used to be.

Since the end of the cold war, it has become increasingly clear that military threats are diminishing in comparison to other kinds of threats which to not originate from national Governments but arise for various reasons, such as economic or social exclusion. The new security challenges may include a long-term, continuing deterioration of the environment and sudden environmental crises, the spread of HIV/AIDS and other contagious diseases, international crime, drugs, the disintegration of societies and refugee movements.

While the prospect of major military conflicts has become less likely, new threats include terror and violence in varying forms. They may come from quarters which have failed to build a society with respect for human rights and democratic principles. It is therefore a frightening prospect to see the spread of weapons ending up in irresponsible hands. One of the most terrifying threats is the possibility that weapons of mass destruction could be used by terrorist organizations.

After the horrible events of last autumn, work has continued - more intensively than before - to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, missile technology, and biological and chemical weapons. The capacity of existing storage facilities of dangerous material should be better controlled, gradually limited, reduced and finally destroyed.

New security challenges call for increasing international commitment and multilateral cooperation at all levels. We need to step up efforts to find common responses to global challenges. Every State sharing our common goals has a vital role to play in the fight against terrorism.

The European Union's response after the terrorist attacks of September has been strong and united, guided by the principles of the United Nations. Commitment to a multilateral approach and action will also cover arms control and non-proliferation. Fifteen member States have been working within the international coalition against terrorism. We are continuing to build on this and we are firmly committed to it.

(Mr. Satuli, Finland)

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament has reason to be proud of its achievements. Thus, the Chemical Weapons Convention opened a new era in international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. It was the first multilaterally negotiated legal instrument to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction in an effectively verifiable manner. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was also welcomed as a historic step toward the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Conference on Disarmament plays a valuable and central role in the treatment of security and arms control issues. But for many years, it has not been able to pursue its true mission or reach its potential in negotiating arms-reduction or arms-control agreements. The Conference remains the only multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. It has an indispensable role as an existing forum, ready for use. If the Conference on Disarmament did not exist, the international community should, when necessary, have access to a similar resource. The state of affairs obtaining in the Conference on Disarmament is not representative of the whole picture of the disarmament process. The overall assessment is positive. Arms control has been one of the major achievements of international cooperation over the last decades.

Only today multilateral disarmament diplomacy seems to be encountering certain setbacks. One visible weakness is that not all States have acceded to the arms reduction agreements or adhere to their obligations. Non-compliance is one of the problems. We still believe that it is particularly important to reinforce international norms and fortify the international legal system.

Compliance with agreements to which States have voluntarily acceded is a prerequisite for the credibility of the entire arms control regime. For that reason, verification continues to pose a real challenge to modern arms control treaties. It is essential to strengthen the monitoring and enforcement provisions of the various treaties. Monitoring needs to be reliable and efficient.

Knowledge of methods of verification is the key to globally effective arms control. Verification arrangements often require good scientific knowledge and technical capability from national authorities.

We attach great importance to the cooperative measures in building capacity that are needed to implement obligations under different arms control treaties. Since 1989, Finland has trained chemical analysts from developing countries in the field of chemical warfare agents verification. Finland also supports the training activities in the framework of the CTBT.

Finland subscribes to the views expressed by the Presidency of the European Union, the Ambassador of Spain, speaking also on our behalf, at the beginning of this session. I will try not to repeat what has already been said by the European Union, but I would like to make remarks on some issues on the disarmament agenda and the work that lies ahead.

The previous visitor from Helsinki to the Conference on Disarmament, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, spoke here in 1996, one year before Finland became a full member of the Conference.

(Mr. Satuli, Finland)

At that time, expectations of completing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty were high. The aim was to bring nuclear tests to an end, finally, and to draw up a worldwide norm and a universal treaty. Today, we know what the situation is. The negotiations were completed in 1997, but the Treaty has still not come into force. As the European Union has repeatedly emphasized, we consider explicitly that expediency and the need for genuine security call for the fulfilment of the objectives expressed in 1996, and the entry into force of the Treaty - today perhaps more than ever before.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its associated safeguards regime are the key elements of the global effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Finland calls on all States to conclude additional protocol agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, in order to strengthen the Agency's safeguards system.

In two weeks' time, a new preparatory process is going to start for the NPT Conference of 2005. Two years have passed since the previous Conference, which was deemed to be successful. The NPT is proceeding on the right track, and we hope that all parties adopt a responsible approach. The result achieved in 2000 is extremely challenging. We need a pragmatic and proactive approach in order to boost the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to reinforce the review process. We give our full support to the Swedish Presidency of the Preparatory Committee.

In the end, it is the results that count. In terms of actual nuclear reductions, bilaterally negotiated agreements and unilateral action have, so far, produced results. It is important that future bilateral and other arrangements enhance strategic stability and promote disarmament and non-proliferation as a whole, leading to an internationally accepted regime. We hope that the continuing bilateral efforts will lead us closer to these objectives.

In this context, Finland holds the view that, following the commitments made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, non-strategic nuclear weapons should become an integral part of arms limitation and disarmament negotiations. The international code of conduct is one of the most important goals in spinning-off the positive effects of efforts to prevent the proliferation of missiles. Finland looks forward to the adoption of the code by the end of this year.

Finland also hopes that the time provided by the suspension of the Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention for a year will be used effectively in order to form new and fresh approaches. Parties to the BWC can meanwhile reinforce the Convention by delivering full and transparent declarations and by making sure that their national legislations are in conformity with the obligations.

Measures to reduce conventional weapons have joined the list of key disarmament efforts. For example, the issue of small arms and light weapons has now been placed firmly on the international agenda - something which was not at all self-evident only six years ago, when the first United Nations panel of governmental experts began its work.

(Mr. Satuli, Finland)

One of the ways to combat the destabilizing accumulation of these weapons is to strengthen export controls at the national level, regionally and in terms of international export control regimes. Stronger export controls on these weapons as well are also necessary tools in the fight against terrorism.

The Ottawa Convention prohibiting the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines is clearly one of the major successes in the field of disarmament. Even though Finland is not yet party to the Convention, it supports an effective and global ban on anti-personnel landmines. Finland participates in the work of the European Union to promote the objectives and global implementation of the Ottawa Convention. The Government of Finland stated last year that work is continuing with a view to Finland acceding to the Convention in 2006 and destroying its anti-personnel landmines by 2010, without compromising Finland's credible defence capability.

Finland does not produce or export anti-personnel landmines. During peacetime anti-personnel landmines are kept in stockpiles. Even if Finland is not part of the humanitarian problem caused by the irresponsible use of anti-personnel landmines, we are aware that, by agreeing to this international norm, we are part of the solution.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has acquired some fresh impetus. The process is advancing, especially in the case of unexploded remnants of war and anti-vehicle mines.

It seems to us that there is no better proposal than the one made by Ambassador Amorim of Brazil. A fresh look at this proposal is needed, just because of the new security environment. We consider that it reflects, in the best possible way, the interests of all Conference on Disarmament parties. After all, no country needs to give up its national positions in order to start work.

The content of the Amorim proposal would make it possible to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty, a subject with which we all agree. Discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and nuclear disarmament would clear the air and enable the parties involved jointly to outline the measures needed on these issues in order to attain and strengthen the appropriate international security-producing arrangements.

I can assure you that Finland is trying to do its best in guiding the work of the Conference on Disarmament towards the common goals of the international community. We rely on the good cooperation and common efforts of all partners.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr. Satuli, and request your indulgence for a few moments while I escort our distinguished guest from the hall.

I now have the pleasure of giving the floor to the distinguished representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Skuratovskyi.

Mr. SKURATOVSKYI (Ukraine): Mr. President, since this is the first time I take the floor during your presidency, allow me to take the opportunity to wish both you and the honourable Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, every success in your high posts and to assure you that you can always rely on the support in your endeavours of the delegation of Ukraine. I would also like to inform the Conference that the President of Ukraine has signed the law approving the ratification by the Verkhovna Rada - the Parliament of Ukraine - of the Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons (Protocol IV) to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. Thus, Ukraine has taken all the measures at the national level necessary to put the Protocol into force.

Having ratified Protocol IV, Ukraine has become a State Party to all the protocols annexed to the above Convention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the distinguished representative of Ukraine for his statement. I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Distinguished delegates, I have asked for the floor today to express my gratitude to all of you and to the President of the Conference who congratulated me on my appointment to the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Despite its current difficulties, the Conference has a long and noble history of outstanding achievements. This body is famous for producing instruments of historic dimensions which determine the future of the international community. The Conference is the embodiment of the collective wisdom of mankind and thus puts on us a great political and historical responsibility for the safety of the world.

Many of you are aware of my close association with arms control and disarmament and still I consider this appointment as a big challenge - not as a burden in addition to my position of Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, but rather as a great privilege.

I would like to thank you all for your positive reaction to the Secretary-General's proposal for my appointment. Let me assure you that in the execution of my mandate I shall rely on your diplomatic skills and experience and on your political will to further international security. For my part, I extend to you my helping hand and my full cooperation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you very much and once again welcome you to assist us in whatever we try to do. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If not, before closing this plenary allow me to say a few words as to how we shall jointly continue our activities. I shall continue my consultations. I am ready to meet the different regional groups so that we might be in a position to build upon what had been achieved before the Finnish presidency started this Monday.

(The President)

On the basis of what we have already done over these first four days, I am very encouraged to see that there is potential to go forward and, as I indicated in the presidential consultations on Monday afternoon, I intend to give you some possible practical elements which might be addressed in more detail when we come back after the break on 13 May.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference and the last one of the first part of the session will be held on Thursday, 28 March 2002, and I understand that we will also have the pleasure at that plenary of welcoming the Foreign Minister of Pakistan. The meeting will take place in this room at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.